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Is Calgary really a world-class city?

Mike Morrison say no one in New York has heard of it

PAGE 8

OSCAR NOMS, SNUBS ARE IN

JENNIFER ANISTON, RALPH FIENNES AND JAKE GYLLENHAAL GET ACADEMY'S COLD SHOULDER

PAGES 28-29

SUN SETS ON TARGET

A woman (carrying a bag from nearby Dollarama) walks past the Target store at Calgary's Sunridge Mall on Thursday afternoon. Less than two years after U.S.-based Target Corp. expanded north of the border, it announced Thursday it would close all 133 Canadian stores. For more, see pages 6 and pages 18. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Cybercrime team 'already stretched to limit': Police

Busy sophomore year. Investigators turn to academics, private industry to keep pace with new case-per-day workload

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Quoted

"Our cybercrime area is already stretched to the limit because the use of technology to commit crimes — everything from bullying to identity theft to trafficking and child pornography, to the multitude of frauds committed — is continuing to grow."

Chief Rick Hanson

Police cybercrime investigators are linking with new partners as their caseload has doubled and the technology being used by new-age crooks rapidly evolves.

The Cybercrime Support Team was established in January 2013 and its seven members were involved in roughly 200 cases, ranging from high-profile murders to complex international fraud schemes.

In 2014, that number shot up to 400 — more than a case per day, on average.

"Our cybercrime area is already stretched to the limit because the use of technology to commit crimes — everything from bullying to identity theft to trafficking and child pornography, to the multitude of frauds committed — is continuing to grow," police Chief Rick Hanson told Metro in a recent interview.

Overseen by Staff Sgt. Ryan Jepson, the cases the support team works on are complex. To the untrained ear, terms like cryptography, malware and phishing hold little meaning.

As a result, his unit has also begun meeting with computer science and security experts at the University of Calgary as well as those in the private industry.

"It's kind of a bit of a road show that we've gone on where we're speaking to members of corporate Calgary and others about how we can better exchange information," he said.

One of the academics he's been talking with is Michael Locasto, an assistant professor in the U of C's computer sciences department, whose primary area of expertise concerns the "bits and bytes" of technology systems and how they can be corrupted.

Locasto deemed the partnership with police preliminary at this point but said the university could get something out of it, too, by introducing new avenues of instruction for up-and-coming information technology students.

He surmised that the ins-and-outs of an investigation are the same, but the places where police search for clues are continuously changing.

"Really, where they may need some partnerships is understanding what the absolutely new forms of technology are that are coming down the pike," he said.

"That's something that academic research is appropriately and entirely focused on is anticipating how systems and technology will radically change."

Jepson said a primary goal is to identify the original sources of cybercrime.

"We want to increase our ability to respond to the threat actors, not just the threats themselves," he said.

His unit has also proven useful in opening new avenues on cases where the trail has seemingly gone cold.

Last year, Jepson's team needed just one day to hone in on the location of a fugitive who had eluded law enforcement for five years. The individual's physical location was pinpointed and he was subsequently arrested.

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Small business pushed out by big-box stores

Cochrane. First time town has seen so many major retailers opening up: Official

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Jess Johnston's days as a barista in her own Cochrane coffee joint are numbered after rental increases and big-box stores are forcing her to close the doors of her 13-year-old business. HELEN PIKE/METRO

Businesses in the Town of Cochrane are worried about what they see as a continuing trend — big-box stores popping up left and right, forcing some established stores to close up shop.

Java Jamboree, a coffee joint that has offered the town specialty hot drinks for more than 10 years, is filled to the brim with customers. But there's tension brewing over a letter on the counter detailing the cafe's approaching close date.

"It's really unfortunate," Jess Johnston said. "Once upon a time, this area of Cochrane I am in was the highest-traffic area ... but nowadays there are so many new developments that people are not at all coming in the numbers that they once were."

Johnston will close up shop in March and take a break. At 30, she's had the business for six years and isn't sure what's next for her.

She said local shops are having to compete with bigger stores, and with no break in rent for the duration of her ownership, it's tough to keep up.

But Mike Korman, the town's economic-development manager, said big-box stores like Walmart are just a part of what the city needs to keep people shopping in Cochrane.

"We're trying to ensure that people in Cochrane have the services they require and that they don't go shop in Calgary," he said. "We feel as though the major retailers will keep people local, so they will shop in the local stores as well."

He added there's definitely been a change over the years and this is the first time the town has seen so many big-box stores.

"We have a lot of major retailers opening up in town because we have ... 45 acres worth of development," Korman said. "They're mostly focusing on major retail."

Greg Long owns a chiropractor's office in town and has lived in Cochrane for 13 years.

"There's been lots of developments, and sort of inevitably ... (there are) lots of pros and cons associated with that," Long said. "Small business is always somewhat compromised by the expenses of existence."

Karl Sine, an actor in town, was sorry to hear Java Jamboree is closing.

"Places like this are the heart of Cochrane," he said.

Sine said one of the reasons he grounded himself in the town was because of the culture, and with big-box retailers moving in, he figures he may as well live in a suburb of Calgary.

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Parents furious over school move

Original site scuttled — for now. Residents in Auburn Bay said they'd been told of plans for Seton facility for seven years or more

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Sue Zucchelli's older kids spend more than two hours a day travelling on the bus between their home in Auburn Bay and Bishop Grandin High School.

It's an ordeal the mother of five hoped to spare her three younger ones from in the future by sending them to a planned, 1,500-student high school in the adjacent community of Seton — construction goals indicate the massive facility will be ready come fall 2017.

But the Calgary Catholic School District has recently gone public with plans to shift development of the long-awaited school to the newly developing area known as Legacy, located across the Bow River.

The move has prompted a firestorm of criticism from parents in Zucchelli's community and others nearby, who had hoped their kids would have just a short vehicle ride — perhaps even be able to walk in some cases — to the Seton site, situated near the South Health Campus.

"It has a huge impact — part of it is that now I feel deceived and that's never a good feeling," Zucchelli said, later adding, "The whole thing doesn't even make sense to me and there was no consultation whatsoever. It was just kind of sprung on everybody."

A representative with the Catholic district said a decision to switch sites was made in late November or early December and a meeting held Tuesday to discuss the move was attended by about 200 parents.

Communications director Tania Younker said there were "variables" with the site in Seton — the community is being developed by Brookfield Residential — that threatened the crucial timeline for opening the school.

Brookfield couldn't be reached for comment Thursday afternoon.

It's believed the other two Catholic high schools in Calgary's south end, Grandin and Bishop O'Byrne, will be at 100 per cent capacity by the time the new facility is ready, Younker noted.

Younker said the hope is still to put the Seton site to use for a school in the future and it would be featured on the district's capital plans, which serve as annual infrastructure wish lists submitted to Alberta Education.

"We still have hopes to build a high school on that site, it's just a matter of where can we get spaces now," Younker said.

She added that officials held off on posting information about the change online because they wanted to meet face-to-face with parents "to be able to explain to them the rationale and why there was a need to do this."

But the explanation from school officials wasn't good enough for fellow Auburn Bay mother Gayleen McCartney. She said the area where Legacy is being developed already has Bishop O'Byrne in relatively close vicinity — in contrast, online maps indicate Grandin is a minimum 20-minute drive away and the most direct route includes the often-jammed Deerfoot Trail.

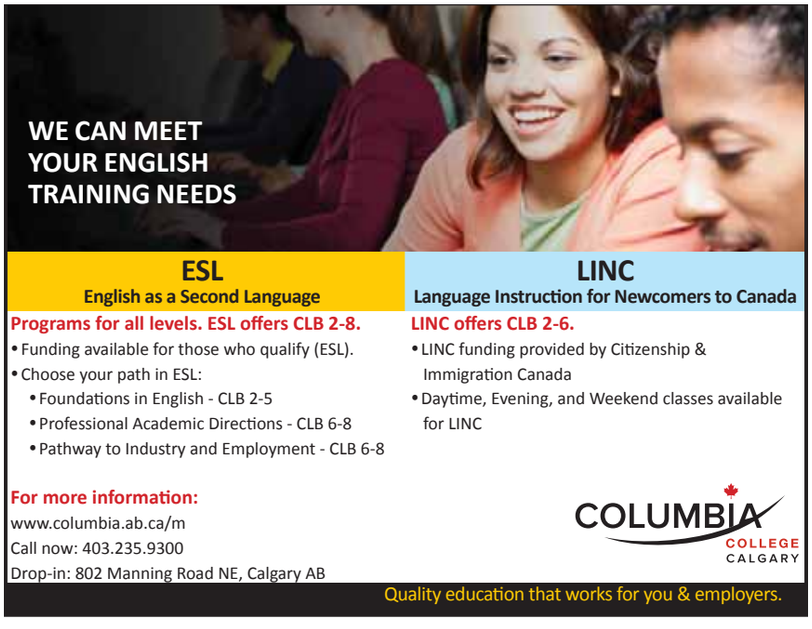
"When will it be our turn?" said McCartney, who'd hoped to send her younger daughter to the Seton school. "It (the high school's construction) does absolutely nothing."

Busing backlog

There have been widespread reports with consistent school bus service for both public and Catholic-school students this year and some of those issues stem from the south due to a high number of newly developing communities.

- Younker said a transportation strategy for the new Legacy-area high school was still being developed.

Sue Zucchelli had hoped to send her twin daughters Lily, left, and Tulia as well as one of her other five children to a new high school in Seton, due to open in late 2017. Calgary Catholic School District officials have since announced that the school will be built further away from the Zucchelli's Auburn Bay home in the community of Legacy. HELEN PIKE/METRO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Alleged Calgary Hells Angel netted in interprovincial bust

A Calgary man is among those facing numerous drug-trafficking charges after a string of busts that spread across two provinces Tuesday.

RCMP raided more than a dozen residences, businesses and vehicles in Saskatchewan and Alberta, seizing a variety of drugs, including more than two kilograms of cocaine, roughly five kilograms of methamphetamine and 145 pounds of marijuana.

Terry Eide, 31, was the only Calgary resident to be charged in the bust and now stands accused of trafficking cocaine, trafficking fentanyl and possession of property obtained by crime over $5,000.

Eide's Facebook page indicates the man is a member of the Hells Angels and in photos it appears he has a "1%" tattoo on his neck, a symbol linked to the notorious outlaw motorcycle gang.

Police also seized hundreds of firearms, several vehicles, more than $100,000 in currency, which they believe is proceeds of crime, and more than 3,300 fentanyl pills, a form of counterfeit oxycontin.

The investigation was a joint operation called Project Forseti and has been ongoing since November 2013.

Saskatoon police say the investigation also took officers to Burnaby, B.C., where they found industrial-style pill presses commonly associated with the production of fentanyl and ecstasy.

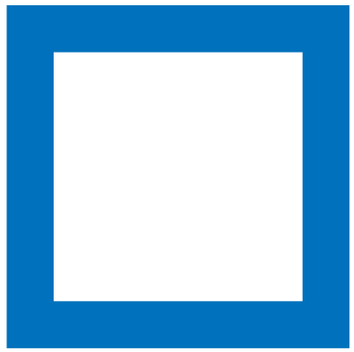
In total, 14 people were charged, with 12 of the accused from Saskatoon and one from Vancouver.

METRO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Drug-trafficking investigation

14

In total, 14 people were charged — one from Calgary, 12 from Saskatoon and one from Vancouver.



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Legion's move 'up in the air'

'Extremely important project.' Kensington Legion blames city as developer backs out of plans for new facility

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

Plans for a modern inner-city legion that would both honour military vets and usher in a new generation of their supporters are "up in the air," a representative says, suggesting the city has put too lofty a price on a parcel of land required for the project.

For two years, organizers with the Kensington Legion branch No. 264 have been planning a land-swap deal with the city that would allow them to erect a new headquarters west of their current location.

The reimagined facility has been branded as a saviour for those who frequent the current Kensington sanctuary. Sales of cheap drinks and eats have dropped over the years and officials had hoped to build a multi-floor facility that would allow the legion to continue operating on the ground level, but allow for residential and professional tenants overhead.

But legion treasurer Mark Barham said developer Qualico has walked away from the project after being told it would be required to fork over more than $1.5 million to purchase a "remnant parcel" of land that is six metres wide and about 30 metres long. It features some trees and a utility right-of-way for sewer and water mains.

"Everything's up in the air now ... we can't start at day one because we already spent $50,000 on (legal costs) and we can't afford to do that again," he said.

Sarah Quayle, manager of real-estate sales and marketing for the city, said her department conducts an external assessment before determining a price for a piece of land. The review includes looking at comparable sales, market conditions, encumbrances on the land title and the planned land use.

She indicated that ongoing negotiations prevented her from delving into specifics on the legion matter, but added, "part of our responsibility is to ensure that we are getting the best return for the citizens of Calgary through the sale of land at market value."

A new home for users of the Kensington Legion has been put in jeopardy as the developer has backed away from the project. A representative pointed the finger of blame square at the city for the disruption in the project's progress. METRO FILE

Target's exit may mean higher prices: Analyst

A customer walks toward the entrance of the Target store at Chinook Centre Thursday. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Some will miss it and some won't, but Target was all the talk in Calgary on Thursday, as the U.S. retail giant announced it would close all 133 of its Canadian stores due to ongoing losses.

With a six-year-old, a four-year-old, and a two-year-old at home, Erin King said the retailer was a go-to location for her shopping needs and she was disappointed by the news.

"I was kind of bummed, because it's a step up from Zellers and Wal-Mart; I really like their quality," she said Thursday, on her way into the Target store in Chinook Centre mall. "I'm just wondering why they couldn't keep it in the major cities."

Dave Popowich with CIBC Wood Gundy in Calgary said Target's entrance into the Canadian market forced a swift reaction from competitors.

"We know that Canadian retailers got aggressive with respect to positioning their products and pricing ahead of that," he said. "So we'll watch over the course of the next several months to see if the Canadian retail landscape's prices adjust and I think only time will tell."

Many Canadian customers complained that Target's prices weren't as low as they were expecting from their experiences with the bulk retailer on shopping excursions south of the border, and that the selection of products in Canadian stores was relatively limited.

King disagreed with that assessment, however.

"Lots of people say it's the prices but, if you ask me, I would rather shop here than elsewhere," she said. "They had really great deals, especially with kids in my age range."

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO, WITH FILES FROM NEWSTALK 770

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CALGARY LIKES TO SAY IT'S 'WORLD CLASS,' BUT NO ONE IN NEW YORK HAS HEARD OF IT

IN DEFENCE OF
Mike Morrison
calgary@metronews.ca

I've just returned from a two-week trip to New York City — but sadly, I've come back with some bad news.

Shockingly, in all that time, I never met a single person that had heard of our city. They hadn't even heard of Naheed Nenshi. I mean, who hasn't heard of Nenshi?

Sure, we can partially blame the American education system, but I think we should find it both telling and humbling.

We like to say we're a world-class city, but clearly one of the world's most important cities doesn't think so.

Of course, it's not fair to simply compare Calgary to New York City. New York had Calgary's current population of 1.2 million back in 1880. That's four years before we even became a town.

Thanks to those curious Europeans, New York definitely has a head start in terms of development. But as they say, "Rome wasn't built in a day." So what are we doing to catch up? Not much.

Scan the papers' headlines for the past year and you'll see a so-called world-class city that's still squabbling over giving people a place to live (with or without a car), building a school for youth with developmental disabilities, taxis, sliding, a transit system crippled by both snow and technology and, yes, whether or not bike lanes should exist.

No wonder no one's heard of us. Any important city would have dealt with these issues long ago.

It's hard to ignore the current trend of resisting anything that would encourage urban growth in Calgary, something that's undoubtedly helped cities like Vancouver and Toronto continue to attract people from all over the world, for both business and pleasure.

Ask anyone why they moved to Calgary, and they'll tell you that they came looking for work. But is moving here just for work something we should be celebrating? Has anyone ever moved here because it's super car-friendly or because of its endless suburbs? Probably not, yet that seems to be the priority of so many Calgarians, or at least the ones in charge.

What are we doing to attract new blood?

Calgary no doubt has its visionaries. I shudder to think what our city would look like without the efforts of people like Coun. Druh Farrell, the National Music Centre's Andrew Mosker and the developers of the East Village. But the growing number of people all too willing to stand in their way is hurting Calgary, both now and in the future.

Pedestrians walk along New York's High Line, a three-mile aerial greenway that was once old railway tracks. MIKE MORRISON/FOR METRO

My favourite example of innovation is New York's High Line, a three-mile aerial greenway that was once old railway tracks. While it was met with some hostility, developers and government saw the potential and now the High Line is the envy of any major city in the world. It has rejuvenated countless neighbourhoods around it and has welcomed millions of visitors to explore New York City like never before.

Calgary's river walk and Peace Bridge is a similar jewel. But there's no way this current city council would have ever allowed its development — probably because it doesn't technically benefit every single Calgarian and isn't much use to cars. We should be counting our lucky stars it passed when it did.

There's a reason people call New York City the greatest city on earth, and there's also a reason why so many people haven't heard of Calgary.

So what are we going to do about it?

MIKE MORRISON WRITES MIKE'S BLOGGITY BLOG AND TWEETS FROM @MIKESBLOGGITY

One is a world-class city

There's a reason people call New York City the greatest city on earth, and there's also a reason why so many people haven't heard of Calgary.

"Sometimes all you have to do is show up and just be yourself." Alexis Hillyard

An advocate for sexual and gender minorities, loving sister, daughter and friend, and a proud gay woman, Alexis Hillyard is example of the positive results of mentoring. Together with other leaders in our community, Alexis is spreading the word that mentoring can have a real impact on the lives of young people.

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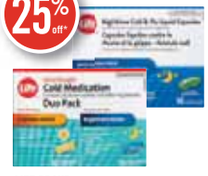

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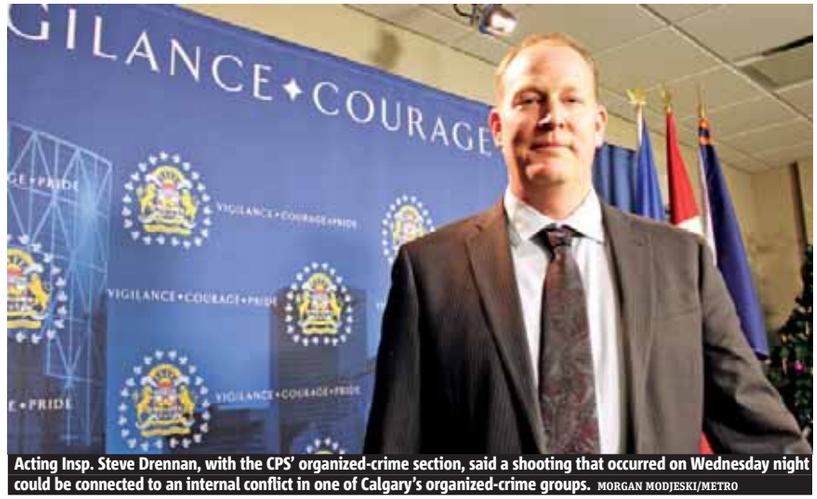

Acting Insp. Steve Drennan, with the CPS' organized-crime section, said a shooting that occurred on Wednesday night could be connected to an internal conflict in one of Calgary's organized-crime groups. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Shootings may be gang infighting

Safety. Wednesday shooting took place near busy grocery store

MORGAN MODJESKI
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Internal conflict among members of an organized-crime group may be connected to what police are calling a "brazen" shooting in Calgary's northeast late Wednesday.

Acting Insp. Steve Drennan with the Calgary police organized-crime section said the shooting, which happened at 7:30 p.m. in a 52nd Street N.E. co-op gas-bar parking lot, could be linked to at least one other shooting.

"There is some indication that there is a connection to the New Year's Day shooting in Rundle, where a house was hit by a drive-by shooting," he said.

"This appears to be very isolated in nature amongst a criminal group that is here in the city, and that's why the Guns and Gangs Unit is investigating."

The driver, a 24-year-old man known to police, was wounded during the gas-bar incident. A female passenger was uninjured.

Drennan said the group primarily deals in cocaine, but other drugs may be involved.

"The cocaine trade is (the) primary source of their criminal enterprise, but it goes beyond that," he said.

"What we've found with this group is that they'll use that commodity and use any type of drug to make their money."

He said the victim and suspect were likely known to each other and noted attackers seem to have no regard for public safety, stressing suppression of the group is a priority for police.

Police ask members of the public with any information to call Crime Stoppers.

Police interviewed the driver and the passenger on Wednesday night. On Thursday afternoon, police were re-interviewing both.

Three men killed in Syria known to police

Edmonton police have confirmed they were aware of three young men who allegedly travelled to Syria to fight with extremists before learning of their death through the media.

EPS Deputy Chief Brian Simpson said police had identified the men as high-risk travellers and had been working with RCMP on the case but were limited in what they could do because of the information they had at the time.

"The challenge with the policing environment in Canada is when something happens overseas, the policing ability to get information in a timely fashion is dependent on the government in power and the processes in place," he said.

Simpson couldn't confirm the exact time when police learned the men had been killed but noted EPS became aware of the deaths through the media.

He said police have seen a huge increase in the number of investigations of radicalized residents over the last year, which are resource intensive.

Calgary Imam Syed Soharwardy called the death of the three Edmonton men disturbing and said more needs to be done to prevent more Canadians from being recruited.

"I have been asking the government for a long time to do a national inquiry to find out who is brainwashing them, who is funding the travel, who is facilitating their travel," he said.

Soharwardy said he believes people are being targeted by local recruiters.

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NE012G215

Groups take charge of poverty reduction

Enough for All.
City hands off program to Vibrant Communities Calgary

MORGAN MODJESKI
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Calgary's community has taken the reins on efforts to end poverty in the city, officials said Thursday.

Implementation of Calgary's Enough for All poverty reduction strategy is underway after the official transition of the program from the municipal government to Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC).

At a ceremony at the Calgary YWCA, Mayor Naheed Nenshi said he believes VCC is the best organization to implement the program, noting all of Calgary's residents have a role to play in reducing poverty.

"It has taken longer than I would have liked to get to this transition point," he said, "but it was really important to me that the strategy be owned by the community — that it not be the city imposing it."

"That has worked very, very well on the 10-year strategy on homelessness and I'm hoping that we'll be able to replicate that kind of success here."

Part of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative, approved by city council in 2013, the Enough for All strategy has outlined a number of goals, including ensuring 95 per cent of Calgary's population is at or above Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off by 2023.

Lucy Miller, president and chief executive of the United Way Calgary and Area, said seeing the program transition to VCC was, "very powerful and very humbling."

"I grew up in poverty and I think everyday that we don't win on this issue, there's somebody else like me going to school, trying not to cry ... because they're so hungry."

"It's unacceptable," she said, noting the group will have support from the United Way and the city moving forward.

Franco Savoia, executive director of VCC, said the organization is ready for the challenge to implement the strategy, saying they'll be working on a four-year implementation plan over the coming months.

"That really will set the direction," Savoia told reporters.

"What we're about right now is we're engaging and consulting. We'll be going back out to the stakeholders ... we're going to be putting priorities in place, because there's a lot of recommendations in the plan."

"We're going to have to pick some areas and go very deep."

Nenshi — alongside representatives from Momentum, the United Way and VCC — concluded the ceremony with an official signing of a partnership commitment to work together to end poverty.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi signs a partnership commitment to end poverty as representatives of Vibrant Communities Calgary, the United Way of Calgary and Area, and Momentum look on at a transition ceremony on Thursday morning. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

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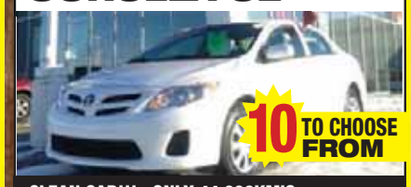

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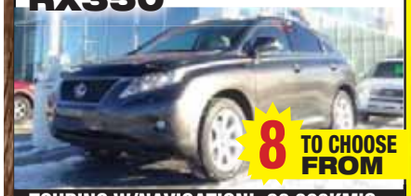

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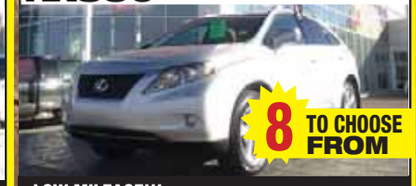

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Nenshi: Delaying building ring road not 'smartest thing to do'

No time like present. Interest rates are low, constructions costs are dropping, mayor notes

Mayor Naheed Nenshi said he thinks the province's hint at potentially delaying Calgary's southwest ring road is not the right financial decision.

On Wednesday, Premier Jim Prentice said the estimated $5-billion ring-road leg was on a list of projects that could be delayed as it reviews its budget in the wake of dropping oil prices.

However, at an event on Thursday, Nenshi said the province should continue to move forward with the project when costs are cheapest, even if that means borrowing money.

"With interest rates at historic lows and construction costs starting to fall, it really makes a lot of sense to build giant infrastructure projects while it's cheap," Nenshi told reporters.

Now over later

"With interest rates at historic lows and construction costs starting to fall, it really makes a lot of sense to build giant infrastructure projects while it's cheap."
Mayor Naheed Nenshi

"It does mean the government borrowing money, but again interest rates are very low, and if that is the kind of stimulus that keeps us going, well, we have a bunch of shovel-ready projects," he said, noting the stimulus package delivered in 2008 was successful.

"I think to pull back on that and try to build those when the costs go back up, it's not the smartest thing to do."

Coun. Richard Pootmans, who represents Ward 6 in Calgary's southwest, echoed the mayor's thoughts.

"Is this indeed the right time to be going to industry with an RFP (request for proposals) to build a big project? Yeah it is," Pootmans said. "Even if we have to take on some debt to do it, interest rates are low. And guess what? Construction costs right now are going to be less than they were less than three weeks ago, and I'm going to guess they may even get a bit lower. What a great time to sign a great project."

Alberta Transportation had initially planned to start construction on the project in 2016, with an ideal opening set for 2020. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO, WITH FILES FROM ROBSON FLETCHER

Mayor Naheed Nenshi thinks the Alberta government shouldn't delay plans for the southwest ring road.
ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO FILE

Talk of more tax not going down well with Oliver

Federal Finance Minister Joe Oliver says Canadians are already taxed too much and his government is looking at ways to lower taxes rather than raise them.

Despite that position, Oliver says he won't comment on Premier Jim Prentice musing that he might have to consider a sales tax as the province struggles to deal with low oil prices.

"These are decisions that the provincial government will make. I don't have any comment on that directly," Oliver told reporters in Calgary on Thursday.

Oliver did say if Alberta proceeded with a provincial sales tax, Ottawa would do what it has for other provinces who have harmonized their tax with the GST.

British Columbia, Ontario and most Atlantic provinces were each given one-time payments ranging from $4.3 billion in Ontario to $364 million in New Brunswick to hand over control of their sales-tax programs to the federal government. The harmonized sales tax was contentious in B.C., however, and was rejected by voters in a referendum. The province now collects the provincial and federal portions separately again.

Oliver was adamant that despite the stress put on the economy by lower oil revenues, there won't be any tax increases from his government.

"We're not in favour of increased taxes. We've said that repeatedly. We think ... it makes life more unaffordable for Canadians."

He said the Fraser Institute has calculated that average

Quoted

"We're not in favour of increased taxes. We've said that repeatedly. We think ... it makes life more unaffordable for Canadians."
Federal Finance Minister Joe Oliver

Canadians pay 43 per cent in tax, which is more than they pay for food and lodging combined.

"We think Canadians are taxed more than they should and we're looking for ways to reduce their taxes. Taxes reduce the amount that people have available to spend and to save."

Oliver suggested that a drop off in energy revenues due to low oil prices is only temporary and there is no reason to panic.

"These are tough times for the energy sector, but we do not need to be pessimistic. Knowledgeable observers generally agree that prices will move up at some point, given the long-term demand for energy," he said.

"The unexpected new factor is that crude-oil prices have fallen dramatically since June. The current drop represents the third-largest decline in the last four decades, and I appreciate how hard Calgary has been hit by this reality."

Alberta's projected budget surplus this year has turned into a $500-million deficit. Even if oil rebounds to a projected rate of $65 US a barrel next fiscal year, that still leaves the province almost $7 billion short.

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Terry Hathaway, the executive director of the Calgary Crime Stoppers Association, stands next to a Crime Stoppers vehicle. He says the organization receives 10 new tips on a daily basis. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Crime Stoppers set to break $1.5M mark in rewards

'People still want to help'. More than 70,000 tips received over three decades in Calgary

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

The Calgary Crime Stoppers Association is set to hit a $1.5-million milestone in 2015.

At the end of December, Crime Stoppers had handed out $1,498,776 in rewards to tipsters since it launched in 1982.

Executive director Terry Hathaway said Crime Stoppers typically doles out $40,000 to $70,000 in reward money each year, so he's confident the group will hit the $1.5-million mark in 2015.

"It would be something that we would take notice of, for sure," Hathaway said, adding he feels it's an indication that the system is working.

"The amount of rewards that we authorize is directly based on the amount of successful tips we get throughout the year," he said. "If our rewards are going up or are consistent ... then the tips that we're getting from the public are helping police solve crimes.

"It's a positive for sure."

As of December, Calgary Crime Stoppers had received almost 4,000 tips in 2014, for a total of more than 72,000 over the last 33 years.

Const. Christine Rorison, police co-ordinator for Crime Stoppers Calgary, said the organization is important for police as it provides the public with a safe and secure way to submit information.

"People still want to help," she said. "They still want to solve crime and keep their community safe, and Crime Stoppers provides the tool for them to do that.

"I know a couple of cases where investigators have approached me personally afterwards and said, 'Honestly, I had nothing — I had nowhere to go with my investigation ... and as a result of receiving this tip I was able to move forward and actually lay charges.'"

While tipsters can submit information via text message and online, Hathaway says the majority of tips received by Crime Stoppers still come through its tip phone line.

Whitehorn

Man falls through store ceiling: Police

Police say a man fell through the ceiling at the Whitehorn Safeway after he found himself out of bounds and in a crawl space not meant to carry the weight of a person.

Officers were called to the scene at about 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday after the man fell through the ceiling during business hours.

"He made his way past the areas usually accessible by customers," said Sgt. Cory Mah. "He made his way to the crawl space between the ceiling and fell through."

The man was taken into custody by police for medical assessment, but at this time it is not known whether he will be charged.

"There's an ongoing investigation," said Mah. "The male did not belong inside the business."

METRO

Gas stations hit

Woman accused of credit-card fraud

Calgary police have charged a woman with credit-card fraud after she allegedly bilked three gas stations out of tens of thousands of dollars.

In each case, it's alleged that Lyn De Lapaz, 30, gained the trust of employees at the stations and then encouraged them to put manual transactions on pre-paid credit and gift cards using fraudulently obtained credit-card numbers.

Lapaz would then sell the pre-paid cards at a discount and keep the profits, police say.

She's been charged with three breaches of recognizance, one count of fraud over $5,000 and two counts of possession of credit-card data. She's due in court on Feb. 5.

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You do have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made.

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DEREK ALLAN HUNT

Take notice that on the 13th day of February 2015 at 2:00 pm, at **Courtroom #1208, 12th Floor, Calgary Courts Centre, 601 – 5th Street S.W., Calgary, Alberta**
A hearing will take place.

An application will be made for: Vary Parenting and Termination of Guardianship Order; of your child born on July 19, 2010. If you wish to speak to this matter in court you MUST appear on this date. You do have the right to be represented by a lawyer. If you do not attend in person or by a lawyer, an Order may be made in your absence and you will be bound by any order the Judge makes.

Developers' advocate hopes 'crap' in the past and build

Build Calgary. Details of new city initiative set to be outlined at special city council meeting Friday

ROBSON FLETCHER
robson.fletcher@metronews.ca

The crap is in the past, Guy Huntingford hopes, when it comes to the relationship between Calgary's development industry and its often-adversarial mayor.

In October 2012, Mayor Naheed Nenshi stood before the Calgary Chamber of Commerce and said developers should stop submitting "crap" applications for projects that don't conform to city guidelines.

The incendiary comment marked a low point in the strained relationship between Nenshi and the Urban Development Institute (UDI), Calgary's main advocacy group for the development industry.

Huntingford, who took over as CEO of UDI about eight months later, has since worked to mend fences and said this week he's still working to "foster and encourage" a more collegial relationship.

"We are doing everything we can to make sure we're working collaboratively with the city," Huntingford said. "Animosity gets you nowhere."

That's not to say he and the mayor have always seen eye-to-eye.

Nenshi recently took issue with statements in a publication put out by UDI and the Calgary branch of the Canadian Home Builders Association, particularly an assertion that new homebuyers pay "100 per cent of the cost of building new communities."

"That is 100 per cent wrong," Nenshi said.

Huntingford said UDI has since exchanged correspondence with the mayor to smooth over that disagreement, adding the assertion was in reference to the costs of growth "inside the walls of a new community" and not "off-site" infrastructure like "all the big pipes" that connect communities.

Infrastructure costs

"Whoever's benefiting from the infrastructure should pay for the infrastructure. That's easy to say but incredibly complicated to calculate."
Guy Huntingford, CEO of the Urban Development Institute

The costs of such pipes — for water and wastewater — are split evenly between the city and developers under a development agreement negotiated in 2011, Huntingford said.

The city committed to renegotiate that agreement by the end of 2015, and Nenshi has indicated he'd like to see developers start paying for 100 per cent of the pipes' cost.

Huntingford said the fees developers pay for water and wastewater infrastructure currently make up between 20 and 25 per cent of the total levies in the standard development agreement.

"Stormwater is 100 per cent paid for by developers," he said, adding that they also pay "transportation, community services, protective services and a whole other host of levies" under the current agreement.

What developers find "disconcerting," Huntingford added, is how the city's position has changed in successive renegotiations.

In 1999, he said the mayor and council of the day were focused on building roads and

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asked developers to pay more for transportation in exchange for having utility costs covered by user fees.

But that didn't end up happening, Huntingford said, and while the transportation levy remains the largest in the agreement, developers have since agreed to cover an increasing number of other costs, including half of water and wastewater.

"And now here we are being asked to pay for all of it," he said.

Despite still disagreeing with the mayor on that point, Huntingford said he's optimistic that this year's re-negotiations will go more smoothly, judging from conversations with Calgary's new city manager Jeff Fielding, who took over the role last June.

"He has said to us and our industry, 'Yes, we absolutely need to work together on these things,'" Huntingford said of the city's new top administrator.

Fielding, for his part, has described dealing with growth as "the most critical topic" the city is facing. On Friday, he is set to give city council an update on a new initiative called "Build Calgary."

"It is conceived to bring together the right resources from across the organization to focus on, and solve, the right problems," Fielding wrote in a memo to city staff.

The initiative does not create a new department or business unit, Fielding explained, but rather draws on staff "from across the organization" in order to "focus immediate and collective attention on planning and building a great city."

Huntingford said he's looking forward to working with the Build Calgary team toward that same goal.

"Building the city is a very complicated, very expensive task, and we need to work together on this," he said. "Neither side can do it independently of the other."

Guy Huntingford, CEO of Urban Development Institute, in his downtown office. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

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Target Corp. to close 133 Canadian stores

Full retreat. Target expects $5.4 billion US in losses over its last quarter, mostly from its underperforming Canadian stores

Workers install an outdoor sign at the new Target store at the Mic Mac Mall in Dartmouth, N.S., on July 20, 2013. Target says it will discontinue operating its 133 Canadian stores. ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Less than two years after Target Corp. threw open the doors of its first Canadian stores with grand expectations, the discount retailer is retreating back to the United States in defeat.

The Minneapolis-based company said Thursday it has decided to wind up its money-losing operations in Canada, a move that affects 133 stores and 17,600 employees across most of the country.

"After a thorough review of our Canadian performance and careful consideration of the implications of all options, we were unable to find a realistic scenario that would get Target Canada to profitability until at least 2021," said Target chairman and chief executive Brian Cornell in the announcement.

Before its launch, Target was once considered the biggest threat to Canadian businesses, partly because its reputation with consumers was unique. Many Canadians would trek south of the border to wander the aisles of U.S. Target stores searching for deals and products they couldn't find at home.

But when Target arrived in Canada, the story wasn't the same. Complaints about empty shelves, high prices and a selection that fell short of expectations flooded social media.

Target Corp. will record about $5.4 billion US in pre-tax losses in its fourth-quarter, with most of it related to the Canadian operation.

The company said it would provide $175 million of credit to fund Target Canada's operations while it winds down under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, or CCAA, a Canadian equivalent to the U.S. Bankruptcy Act.

RBC analyst Irene Nattel said it is unclear who would be in a position to take over Target's 133 stores.

Target says the stores will remain open during a court-supervised liquidation period and it's working to ensure employees are paid at least 16 weeks of severance.

The company says it will also work with an adviser to sell its real estate and expects to spend between $500 million and $600 million in cash to end its Canadian operations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Target. Closures send 'a very strong message'

U.S. retailers planning to cross the border can learn some valuable lessons from the failure of Target, which announced Thursday it is shutting down its 133 Canadian stores just two years after its much-anticipated launch.

"It's a huge thing, after two years, for a brand like Target to wave the white flag," said Doug Stephens, the founder of Toronto-based consulting firm Retail Prophet. "I think that really sends a very strong message to others that maybe the Canadian market isn't the easy pickings that they thought it might be."

Canadians, who had high hopes for the discount retailer known for its broad product selection and low prices, were underwhelmed when they discovered bare shelves and less-than-impressive pricing in the new locations.

It all speaks to the importance of understanding the Canadian market and making a good first impression, Stephens said.

"You've got to deliver on customer expectations or exceed them."

Target's missteps, including supply-chain issues that left shelves nearly empty during the all-important launch, could serve as a cautionary tale for other U.S. retailers, experts say.

Quoted

"You've got to deliver on customer expectations or exceed them."

Retail Prophet founder Doug Stephens

Retail analyst Mark Satov says the biggest lesson for U.S. retailers is to test the Canadian market by entering at a gradual pace, rather than opening a large number of stores at once.

"You dip your toe into a new market and you learn, while controlling the potential loss," Satov said.

When Target first entered Canada, they opened more than 120 stores in the first year — a "Herculean feat" for any retailer, said Stephens.

Ultimately, Target failed to grasp some of the nuances of the Canadian market that its more established competitors understood, said Satov.

While U.S. chains may pause to consider Target's failure, the company's exodus is good news for other Canadian retailers, with Walmart Canada and Canadian Tire set to benefit the most, according to RBC analyst Irene Nattel.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Shoppers browse at a Target store in Toronto on Thursday. Target says it will close its stores in Canada — a market that it entered only two years ago.

COLIN PERKEL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Retailers off-target

Target is far from the first retailer that has had trouble breaking into other markets. Here are some others:

- **Walmart.** The world's largest retailer, which now operates in 27 countries, rarely acknowledges defeat. But in 2006, the Bentonville, Ark.-based discounter threw in the towel in Germany.
- **Best Buy.** In January 2013, the consumer-electronics chain said it would close 15 of its stores in Canada and cut about 5 per cent of its workforce in the country as it tries to revamp its strategy. In November 2011, it said it was closing all 11 of its U.K. big-box stores.
- **Sony.** Sony Corp. also announced it would be closing its 14 retail stores in Canada; they will be shut down over the next six to eight weeks. The company said its products will still be available online.

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Rehtaeh's story not finished, mom says

Rehtaeh Parsons case. Man gets one year of probation for distributing child porn

HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax

The court proceedings surrounding the distribution of child porn in the Rehtaeh Parsons case may be over, but her mother says Rehtaeh's story is far from finished as she awaits the results of a review into how her daughter's case was handled by police.

On Thursday, the second man who pleaded guilty in the child-porn case was sentenced in Halifax youth court to a year of probation for distributing a sexually graphic image showing Rehtaeh, who was 15, leaning out of a window as he smiled at the camera and gave a thumbs-up sign.

"Justice will only be served if this young man takes a different path in his life," Rehtaeh's mother, Leah Parsons, told reporters outside court.

The 17-year-old Parsons died after being taken off life-support following a suicide attempt in April 2013. Her parents say she was bullied for months as a result of the photo.

The 20-year-old was ordered to attend counselling, not contact Parsons' family, not drink or possess alcohol and submit a DNA sample, among other conditions.

Glen Canning, father of Rehtaeh Parsons, leaves provincial court in Halifax on Thursday. ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dalhousie. Dentistry students avoid charges

Halifax Regional Police have finished a review of misogynistic comments made about female dentistry students at Dalhousie University and conclude no crimes have been committed.

The police department says a team of senior investigators in the Criminal Investigation Division reviewed the material allegedly posted by male classmates of the women on a Facebook page.

The department says it will not proceed with a criminal investigation.

Dalhousie had initially refused a police request to provide the postings based on student privacy concerns but then indicated it would co-operate.

Reports of the offensive posts and the university's initial response prompted rallies and calls for the expulsion of the 13 students.

The Facebook page at the centre of the controversy has been taken down.

According to the CBC, members of the Class of DDS Gentlemen page on Facebook voted on which woman they'd like to have "hate" sex with and joked about using chloroform on women.

The CBC said that, in another post, a photo of a woman in a bikini carries the caption, "Bang until stress is relieved or unconscious."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Egypt

No reprieve for jailed journalist

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said he "didn't leave Canada with any expectation that we could solve the issue today" regarding the case of imprisoned Egyptian-Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy.

Baird made the comments during a visit to Cairo on Thursday, after meeting with his Egyptian counterpart to discuss, among other things, the situation of the 40-year-old journalist who has spent more than a year behind bars in Cairo after he and two colleagues were arrested while working for satellite news broadcaster Al Jazeera English.

The statements came as a disappointment to Fahmy and his family, who had expressed hope that Baird's visit would mark the "finale" to what has been a nightmarish experience for the journalist.

"I do believe that Prime Minister (Stephen) Harper could do more to obtain my release if he were to directly intervene in our case," Fahmy said in a statement released by his lawyers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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19,000 French sites hit by cyberattacks

Charlie Hebdo fallout. France is on edge since last week's terror attacks; French president seeks to calm religious tensions

Hackers have targeted about 19,000 French websites since a rampage by Islamic extremists left 20 dead last week, a top French cyberdefence official said Thursday, as the president tried to calm the nation's inflamed religious tensions.

France is on edge since last week's attacks, which began Jan. 7 at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo.

The paper, repeatedly threatened for its caricatures of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad, buried several of its slain staff members Thursday even as it reprinted another weekly issue with Muhammad on its cover.

Calling it an unprecedented surge, Admiral Arnaud Coustilliere, head of cyberdefence for the French military, said about 19,000 French websites had faced cyberattacks in recent days, some carried out by well-known Islamic hacker groups.

The attacks, mostly relatively minor denial-of-service attacks, hit sites as varied as military regiments to pizza shops, but none appeared to have caused serious damage, he said.

Pallbearers carry the casket of Charlie Hebdo cartoonist Bernard Verlhac, known as Tignous, decorated by colleagues. MICHEL EULER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Military authorities launched round-the-clock surveillance to protect the government sites still coming under attack.

"What's new, what's important, is that this is 19,000 sites; that's never been seen before," Coustilliere said.

"This is the first time that a country has been faced with such a large wave."

Among the groups suspected of launching the attacks, French officials named MECA: Middle East Cyber Army, Fallaga team and Cyber Caliphate.

According to Arbor Networks, a private company that monitors Internet threats, in a 24-hour period alone, France was the target of 1,070 denial-of-service attacks.

That's about a quarter as many as the United States, but the U.S. hosts 30 times as many websites.

Coustilliere called the attacks a response to the massive demonstrations against terrorism that drew 3.7 million people into the streets Sunday across France.

He pointed to groups that used tactics like posting jihadist symbols on companies' websites.

President Francois Hollande insisted Thursday that any anti-Muslim or anti-Semitic acts must be "severely punished." He said France's Muslims should be respected, "just as they themselves should respect the nation."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Belgium. Suspects shot dead in anti-terror raid

Belgian security forces killed two terror suspects with links to Syria in a fierce shootout in the eastern city of Verviers on Thursday and arrested another, foiling a major and imminent attack against police buildings, authorities said.

The raid came amid an international hunt for possible accomplices to the attackers who killed 20 people in France last week before being shot dead by police. Those attacks, by men claiming allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant group in Syria and al-Qaida in Yemen, have raised fears around Europe of more attacks.

However, Belgian federal magistrate Eric Van der Sypt said in Brussels that there was no link at this stage between the Paris attacks and the Belgian operation, which he said is the result of an investigation that has been underway for a few weeks.

The suspects immediately opened fire on police when they closed in on them near the city's train station, he said. There was an intense firefight for several minutes on an upper level of a building in Verviers where the raid took place, which appears to be residential.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AirAsia

Bad weather hinders search

Bad weather and poor underwater visibility on Thursday prevented Indonesian navy divers from searching inside the large chunk of AirAsia jet wreckage that is believed to be the fuselage.

At least 15 divers descended to the seabed at a depth of 28 metres to examine the piece of wreckage, calculate its weight and search for bodies. They were unable to do so because of the weather and sea conditions.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Investigation

Returning to the scene of a deadly prison-bus crash

Investigators trying to determine the cause of a West Texas prison-bus crash, which killed eight inmates and two guards, returned to the site Thursday to sift through the debris.

The state Department of Criminal Justice bus skidded on an icy overpass, slid down an embankment and collided with a passing Union Pacific freight train Wednesday morning.

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Obama to ask for $2B so states can create paid leave programs

Addressing issue at State of the Union.
White House says U.S. president will make new push on the issue beginning Tuesday night

U.S. President Barack Obama signs a presidential memorandum Thursday on paid leave. CAROLYN KASTER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Barack Obama on Thursday renewed his push for paid leave for parents and other workers, saying he's astonished so many people don't get paid sick leave.

"How can we support working families so they have the tools to succeed in this new economy?" Obama asked at a Baltimore café that offers earned sick leave to workers. He and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) had just discussed work-life balance with women.

The White House said this week that Obama will make a new push on the issue, beginning with the State of the Union address he delivers Tuesday night.

Obama will call on Congress, states and cities to pass measures to allow tens of millions of workers to earn up to a week of paid sick time a year. He'll ask Congress for more than $2 billion to encourage states to create paid family and medical leave programs.

In addition, Obama aims to provide federal employees with up to six weeks of paid sick leave to care for a new child. And he'll propose Congress pass legislation to give federal workers an additional six weeks of paid parental leave.

Paid leave at forefront

"We really can do something about it."

U.S. President Barack Obama, noting that the issue of paid leave transcends demographics and geography

Obama said the Baltimore café owner has offered above-minimum-wage pay and earned sick leave to all employees since opening in late 2010. He said that "pays dividends," citing reduced turnover as one benefit.

Obama wants Congress to pass legislation to allow workers to earn up to a week of paid sick leave to care for themselves or a sick family member, obtain preventive care or deal with domestic violence. Workers would earn an hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours they work. Obama will call on states and cities to adopt similar legislation. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Bombardier shares in tailspin after business jet put on hold

Learjet 85. Slow sales, not technical issues, behind decision to pause development of jet, company chief says

Bombardier's shares plunged more than 25 per cent in heavy trading Thursday following a revised outlook for its aerospace business, including plans to put development of the Learjet 85 business jet on hold, eliminating 1,000 jobs in the United States and Mexico.

On the Toronto Stock Exchange, the Montreal-based company's shares dropped $1.07 or 25.85 per cent to a more-than-two-year low of $3.07 on a very heavy volume of some 65 million shares.

The aerospace and rail-equipment manufacturer said before markets opened that it would "pause" development of the Learjet 85 but continue to sell other models and focus on two other aircraft programs — the Global 7000/8000 business jet and the much-delayed CSeries passenger jet for commercial airlines.

Bombardier said it plans to put development of the Learjet 85, illustrated above, on hold due to weak customer interest. CONTRIBUTED

About 600 employees who worked on the Learjet 85 will be switched to the Global and CSeries projects, the company said.

President and CEO Pierre Beaudoin confirmed slow sales and weak immediate prospects for improvement in the smaller business jet market were behind the Learjet 85 decision, not because of any further technical problems with the aircraft, whose first flight was delayed until last April.

Beaudoin denied that Thursday's announcement signals that Bombardier is in peril. "We have a product line where we are the global leaders in business aircraft, regional aircraft and in our train business," he said.

The Learjet announcement follows last year's elimination of 2,900 positions around the world. It laid off more than 200 workers last June because of delays in the Learjet 85 flight-test program. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"It's a market that has not come back since 2008, and we think that the right decision ... is to take a pause."

Pierre Beaudoin, Bombardier's president and CEO

Caesars. Unit of casino giant files for Chapter 11

A cash-strapped division of casino giant Caesars Entertainment Corp. said early Thursday that it filed for bankruptcy protection in Chicago, hoping the court agrees to its plan to get out from under $18.4 billion US of debt.

The division Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. owns and operates most of Caesars' 50 properties worldwide. Caesars CEO Gary Loveman said in a statement that its casino-hotels would remain open and continue to host meetings and events, assuring customers that their loyalty points would still accrue and the company's lineup of on-stage entertainers would keep performing according to their schedules.

More than 30,000 people are employed at Caesars Entertainment Operating Co.'s 38 casino-hotels, including Bally's and Caesars in Atlantic City and the iconic Caesars Palace on the Las Vegas Strip. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man takes photos of Caesars Palace hotel and casino in Las Vegas on Monday. The cash-strapped division of casino giant Caesars Entertainment Corp. said Thursday it filed for bankruptcy protection. JOHN LOCHER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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Furniture

Ikea recalling baby mattresses

Ikea says it's recalling 169,000 baby crib mattresses in Canada and the U.S. after receiving two reports of infants getting trapped between the mattress and the end panels.

Ikea said the children were not injured. The recall applies to mattresses used for Ikea's Vyssa-style cribs, including the models Vacker, Vinka, Spelevink, Sloa and Slummer. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BlackBerry. Shares give back recent gains

BlackBerry shares have given back a little over half of the spectacular gains that they made late Wednesday after a news report said the Canadian smartphone company had been approached by South Korean rival Samsung with a takeover offer.

Both companies have since issued denials.

BlackBerry responded late Wednesday that it has not engaged in discussions with Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. about a possible takeover, and Samsung sent an email saying the report was "groundless."

Reuters said Samsung had met with BlackBerry executives over the possibility of buying the Canadian company for $7.5 billion US. The news agency cited both a source familiar with the proposal and related documents. The two companies are rivals in the smartphone business but have worked together on technology. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Notice of Hearing For Temporary Guardianship Order To

Brian McDowell

Take notice that on the **11th day of February 2015 at 9:30 a.m, at Calgary Family Court, Courtroom # 1205, 601 – 5th Street SW, Calgary, Alberta,** a hearing will take place.

A Director, under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act will make an application for: **Temporary Guardianship Order** of your child born on **March 1, 2014**. If you wish to speak to this matter in court, you MUST appear in court on this date. You do have the right to be represented by a lawyer. If you do not attend in person or by a lawyer, an Order may be made in your absence and the Judge may make a different Order than the one being applied for by the Director. You will be bound by any Order the Judge makes.

You do have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made.

Contact: Diane Charlebois; Jackie Ellice; Daniella Eggink
Calgary and Area Child and Family Services
Phone: (403) 297-2978

Notice of Hearing For Temporary Guardianship Order To

Zoe Fraser

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Contact: Diane Charlebois; Jackie Ellice; Daniella Eggink
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VOICES

PUTTING A CAULKING GUN IN YOUR BUTT IS NOT BEAUTIFUL

THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

How far would you go to get an ass like Kim Kardashian's? Would you do 700 squats a week to build your glutes? Or eat a bucket of KFC per day in hopes of plumping up? Maybe both at once?

Would you meet a woman, claiming to be a nurse who trained in South America, in a hotel room and pay her thousands of dollars to inject "something" into your buttock using a caulking gun? If it's the last one, you wouldn't be alone.

It was reported this week that Toronto-area woman Marilyn Ely Reid pleaded guilty to eight counts of aggravated assault after injecting at least nine women's bum-bums with polymethyl-methacrylate (PMMA), a hard plastic used as a shatter-resistant alternative to regular glass, among other things. The "procedure," which is not approved by Health Canada, led to severe complications in most of the women and, according to doctors, could have been fatal.

Marilyn Reid is clearly an opportunistic monster who should certainly go to jail. But this story saddened me past the fact that some people are terrible.

I have insecurities: face, stomach, overall entire body, the usual. I won't lie, I've Googled certain plastic surgery procedures out of curiosity. There was one involving the under-eye area I was even tempted to pursue, but then I read that there was a two-week healing period.

I realized I'd either have to hide in a cave for two weeks or go out in public and admit that I'd had plastic surgery. I very quickly decided my eyes weren't that bad and went to Shoppers and bought an overpriced cream that I made myself believe would work instead.

I get wanting to "improve" yourself. And I don't want to judge the women who trusted Marilyn Reid and say they should have known that aside from prostitutes and drug dealers, anyone who wants to conduct business in a hotel room is shady at best. But why would these women risk their lives for a passing fad? How long will big butts even be the bomb?

Nicki Minaj and Meghan Trainor are in today, but whose butt will we look to tomorrow? The media is like a weather forecast for your self-esteem. If you have a booty today, great, you're all set. But next time the Twiggy-tuckus is in and you get liposuction, should you save the fat? Keep it in a Ziploc and freeze it so when round rears come back, you can have your butt reinstated?

A quick Google of PMMA brings up some scary stuff. Once it's in your body, it's difficult to remove. Infections are common and pieces of the stuff can get loose in your blood stream and cause all sorts of havoc.

One of Reid's victims was left permanently disfigured, others developed abscesses, infections and one woman was in the hospital for three weeks and couldn't work for an entire year. All this to look better twerking?

I found this post in an Ask an Expert forum: "I had PMMA injections done on my butt in November and I wanted to know when does it stop growing and are there any long term side effects?"

Imagine having a substance in your body that won't stop "growing." And imagine having to resort to the Internet for medical advice because when you tried to ask the person who administered your injections you realized it was just a circus monkey in a white coat.

From Marilyn Monroe to Kate Moss to Kim Kardashian, society itself is on a yo-yo diet and everyone knows yo-yo dieting is bad for you. I'm not saying we can't admire Kardashian's butt, it's an amazing butt, but, do you really want to die for it?

Rebecca Kohler is a stand-up comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Target says goodbye

FAREWELL, DEAR TARGET

EVIE SABEAN
readers@metronews.ca

When you receive texts from multiple people conveying their condolences to you on the closure of Target, you start to realize you may have a problem.

Thankfully I was already wearing black and didn't have to rush home and put on my mourning clothes.

I have been to Target in the United States, and yes, it is far superior. However, Target Canada was still better than my other options. And the clearance? Amazing! When I got $75 video games for $10 and gave them out at kids' birthday parties I felt like Oprah handing out cars. Our family moved into a new home this past year, and the whole place is basically a Target store ad. On closing day when we picked up our keys, we stopped at Target before we went home to pick up the flatbed trolley of furniture I had on hold.

We didn't have a dining room table or a bed, but we had a blue velvet bench with tufted buttons. (On clearance, thank you very much.)

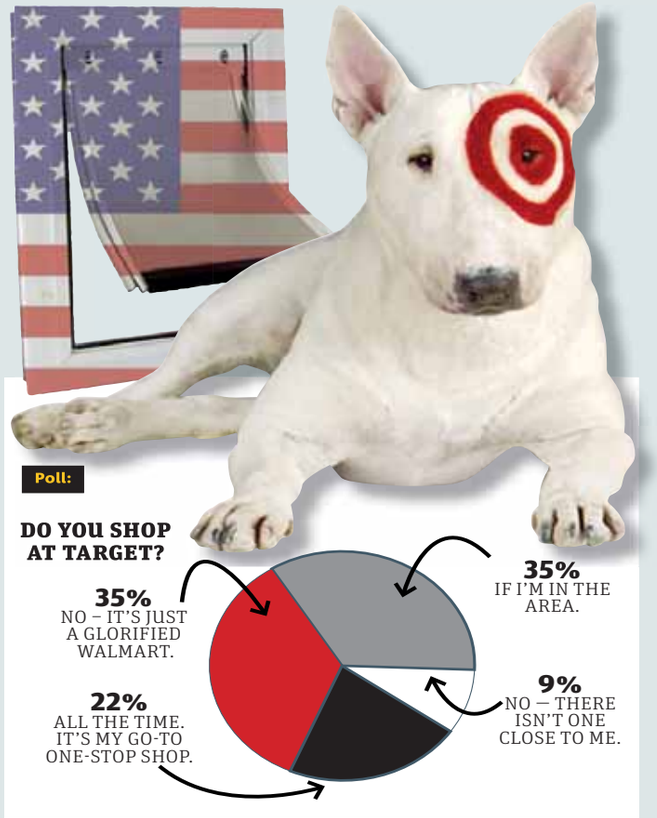
Oh, Target. The place where I have browsed, tried on, and spent too much (way too much) money. It's where I learned that 70 per cent off really did exist and people in red shirts and khakis were the grownup version of Disney characters. It's where I went at least a couple times a week to hide from my husband and two young kids and get lost in the never-ending supply of chevron fashion scarves.

I may hold a memorial service for Target.

I'll serve tea sandwiches on a stylish metal tray from the kitchen department, guests can sit on one of the slipper chairs I purchased from the furniture department, and we'll wipe our tears away with tissues from home essentials.

So long, Target. Although my husband and my Visa bill won't miss you, I definitely will.

Evie Sabean lives in Bedford, N.S. and will soon have more time on her hands and money in her pocket.



TARGET DIDN'T LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS

BERNICE PONTANILLA
readers@metronews.ca

Confession time: As one of those rare Manitobans who didn't shop across the border, Target always seemed an enigma to me, like a far-off Shangri-La.

Those people I knew who did make the trip to Grand Forks would return with stories of cheap clothes, foods, and brand names that weren't available in Canada.

When Target announced it was moving into Winnipeg, I didn't know what to expect, but there were thousands of my fellow 'Peggers who did.

The rich man's Zellers

Target seemed to look the same as when its predecessor Zellers had its liquidation sale, albeit more clean.

And it seems Target simply didn't live up to expectations. It sure didn't for me about three weeks before this past Halloween, when the flyer brandishing cheap candy brought me to the Kildonan Place store on the same Friday the sale prices kicked in. But there was nothing when I got there in the afternoon — on the same day the sale started. Bare shelves were a common problem; Target seemed to look the same as when its predecessor Zellers had its liquidation sale, albeit more clean. The prices weren't as good as the other big box stores, and if there isn't enough stock, customers won't waste time going there.

I'm not shedding a tear at Target's departure, though I am heartbroken at the 17,600 people who've lost their jobs. In Canada, Target just wasn't our Shangri-La.

Bernice Pontanilla is a senior reporter for Metro Winnipeg.

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We can't hack more hacker plots

Analysis. Universal has been mum on finding links between the Sony scandal and their high-tech thriller Blackhat

Chris Hemsworth plays the world's hottest computer nerd in Blackhat. CONTRIBUTED

Sometimes clichés are clichés because they are true. No news is good news. A penny saved is a penny earned. Any publicity is good publicity.

No news is usually good news — unless you're the editor of a newspaper with blank pages to fill — and the math behind a penny saved is a penny earned isn't so hard to figure out, but recently the veracity of any publicity being good publicity has been put to the test.

The Sony hack and ensuing commotion that swirled around the Seth Rogen movie The Interview garnered headlines around the world, moving the story off the entertainment pages and into the news sections.

Stories, some true some not, and reviews, some good, some not, lit up social media.

The brouhaha surrounding the film lived at the very heart of popular culture for several weeks and even President Obama weighed in. But notwithstanding the endorsement of the most powerful film critic in the world, the movie is unlikely to actually make money.

The Guardian suggests The Interview's total cost sits somewhere near $80 million in production and marketing costs, and at the time of this writing has only earned $36 million in digital rentals, purchases and traditional theatrical receipts. The Guardian also says Sony could be facing "damage north of $1 billion by some estimates" as a result of the hack.

So, if this was all a massive publicity stunt, as asserted by certain outspoken twitterratti, it was a marketing failure of Titanic proportions and it could even hurt the box office of other films.

This weekend Blackhat stars Chris Hemsworth as the world's best-looking computer hacker, now serving a 15-year sentence for internet crime.

Authorities give him a get-out-of-jail-free card because he's the only computer whiz on earth geekified enough to stop a cyber terrorist from causing havoc.

You might think a hacking movie would be perfectly timed to take advantage of the hoopla surrounding the Sony situation and yet Universal made no attempt to connect the dots between real-life events and their movie.

Why? The New York Times, quoting unnamed sources, opined that "ticket buyers could be tired of hacking stories after weeks of media attention on Sony, and a film that is too topical might strike potential viewers as less entertaining."

Perhaps Universal's decision not to cash in on the publicity generated by real life events reveals there is no room for current events in a marketplace where two of the top 10 grossing movies of 2014 were based on toy lines (the rest were inspired by novels and comic books) or maybe that sound we hear is the swoosh of an old cliché swirling down the bowl.

In Focus

RICHARD CROUSE

Blackhat

Director. Michael Mann

Stars. Chris Hemsworth, Viola Davis

Cyber crime is a hot-button topic but it doesn't make for very compelling cinema. Blackhat, director Michael Mann's new thriller, is hampered by a lack of drama. Chris Hemsworth plays a genius hacker sprung from prison to help the FBI and Chinese government track down a cyber terrorist, but endless scenes of Hemsworth furiously typing on a laptop aren't the stuff thrillers are made of. Mann tries to spice things up with frenetic shots of a camera racing along wires and onto the information highway, but we've seen that in every hacker movie ever made so it comes across as a hack move in a movie without much to offer. He does stage the occasional heart-pounding action scene, but at 133 minutes the movie feels in need of a reboot.

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And the 2015 Academy Award nominees are...

It's the moment you — or at least professional "Oscar prognosticators" — have been waiting for. The Oscar nominations have been announced. The show airs Feb. 22, giving you less than a month to catch up with Selma, Still Alice, Whiplash and — who are we kidding? You're just going to see Taken 3 again.

Among the notable snubs, incidentally: Selma for everything but Best Picture and Best Song, Ralph Fiennes for The Grand Budapest Hotel, The Lego Movie and the Roger Ebert doc Life Itself. Then again, Marion Cotillard for Two Days, One Night!

Michael Keaton and Edward Norton in Birdman.

Best Picture
- American Sniper
- Birdman
- Boyhood
- The Grand Budapest Hotel
- The Imitation Game
- Selma
- The Theory of Everything
- Whiplash

Best Director
- Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, Birdman
- Richard Linklater, Boyhood
- Bennett Miller, Foxcatcher
- Wes Anderson, The Grand Budapest Hotel
- Morten Tylden, The Imitation Game

Best Actor
- Steve Carell, Foxcatcher
- Bradley Cooper, American Sniper
- Benedict Cumberbatch, The Imitation Game
- Michael Keaton, Birdman
- Eddie Redmayne, The Theory of Everything

Foxcatcher received several nominations including best director. CONTRIBUTED

Best Actress
- Marion Cotillard, Two Days, One Night
- Felicity Jones, The Theory of Everything
- Julianne Moore, Still Alice
- Rosamund Pike, Gone Girl
- Reese Witherspoon, Wild

Best Supporting Actor
- Robert Duvall, The Judge
- Ethan Hawke, Boyhood
- Edward Norton, Birdman
- Mark Ruffalo, Foxcatcher
- J.K. Simmons, Whiplash

Best Supporting Actress
- Patricia Arquette, Boyhood
- Laura Dern, Wild
- Keira Knightley, The Imitation Game
- Emma Stone, Birdman
- Meryl Streep, Into the Woods

Best Adapted Screenplay
- American Sniper
- The Imitation Game
- Inherent Vice
- The Theory of Everything
- Whiplash

Best Original Screenplay
- Birdman
- Boyhood
- Foxcatcher
- The Grand Budapest Hotel
- Nightcrawler

Best Foreign Film
- Ida
- Leviathan
- Tangerines
- Timbuktu

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Aniston among the Oscar snubs

Reese Witherspoon in Wild.
CONTRIBUTED

Academy Awards. Selma receives token nominations, while Ralph Fiennes and Jake Gyllenhaal join Aniston in getting cold shoulder

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

The big takeaway from the Oscar nominations isn't what *was* nominated but what wasn't.

Selma seemed like a no-brainer Academy Awards shoe-in: the first Hollywood film about Martin Luther King Jr. (played by David Oyelowo), directed not by a white man but by a black woman (Ava DuVernay), released into the world amidst race-related marches and protests not too dissimilar from the ones recreated in the film. To paraphrase (with censoring) William Hurt in A History of Violence, how do you screw *that* up?

And yet Selma wound up with a mere two nominations, one for best song (by John Legend and Common, that won a Golden Globe Sunday) and a token one for best picture. "Token best picture nomination" is a strange-sounding term, but that's how it goes when there are now eight best picture nominees. Would Selma have even gotten that in the age of five nominees?

Also snubbed were DuVernay, whose win would have been the kind of story Oscar voters (and journos, and readers) love, and Oyelowo (ditto). But hey, AMAPS feted 12 Years a Slave last year, so maybe they think they can take a year off from caring about race?

Also ignored was Ralph Fiennes' alert, hilarious turn in Wes Anderson's The Grand Budapest Hotel, which nonetheless received nine nominations — the most of any single film. (In second came Birdman, with eight.) Jake Gyllenhaal was MIA for his electric turn as a sociopathic freelance journalist in Nightcrawler. And after a baldly transparent Oscar campaign for her tiny film Cake, Jennifer Aniston — who gained weight for the film — was not among the best actress nominees.

Upsets also happened in the best animated feature category — where one of the year's biggest and most inventive hits, The Lego Movie, was nowhere to be found — and best documentary feature. In the latter, the major upset was the omission of the Roger Ebert documentary Life Itself, to say nothing of films like Frederick Wiseman's National Gallery.

In brighter news, Marion Cotillard received a surprise nomination for the Belgian drama Two Days, One Night — a surprise only because it's a small film that definitely deserves any and all accolades. The Polish film Ida joined the Russian tragedy Leviathan, both excellent, among nominees for best foreign language film. And despite being largely ignored by the Golden Globes, Clint Eastwood's nonjingoistic American Sniper walked off with six nominations, including picture and actor, for Bradley Cooper.

Perhaps the best news, after The Grand Budapest Hotel's many noms, is Boyhood and its six nominations, including picture, director (for Richard Linklater), and supporting actress (Patricia Arquette) and actor (Ethan Hawke). Filmed piecemeal over 12 years, Boyhood won the Golden Globe for best picture (drama) and seems to be the frontrunner for the biggest trophy.

Also continuing their awards season dominance were Birdman, The Imitation Game and The Theory of Everything, which cleaned up in the acting categories. And if anyone cares, Interstellar received two separate sound nominations, despite complaints that at times few could even make out what the hell the actors were saying.

The ceremony airs on Sunday, Feb. 22.

- Wild Tales

Best Documentary Feature
- Citizenfour
- Finding Vivian Maier
- Last Days in Vietnam
- Virunga
- Salt of the Earth

Best Animated Feature
- Big Hero 6
- The Boxtrolls
- How to Train Your Dragon 2
- Song of the Sea
- The Tale of the Princess Kaguya

Best Song
- The Lego Movie
- Selma
- Beyond the Lights
- Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me
- Begin Again

Best Cinematography
- Birdman
- The Grand Budapest Hotel
- Ida
- Mr. Turner
- Unbroken

Best Visual Effects
- Captain America
- Dawn of the Planet of the Apes
- Guardians of the Galaxy
- Interstellar
- X-Men: Days of Future Past

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Chris Pratt ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Theatre award. Chris Pratt chosen as the Hasty Pudding Man of the Year

Guardians of the Galaxy star Chris Pratt has been named Man of the Year by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals.

Pratt also co-stars on Parks & Recreation with Amy Poehler, who was named as Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year last week. "We vehemently deny that the members of the Hasty Pudding Theatricals are obsessed with Parks & Recreation," says Jason Hellerstein, president of the student group. Wednesday's announcement says Pratt became "a bona fide Hollywood heavyweight" in the past year.

Pratt will receive his pudding pot Feb. 6 following a parade through Harvard Square and a roast. Poehler will be honoured Jan. 29.

Last year's winners were Helen Mirren and Neil Patrick Harris. Hasty Pudding Theatricals is America's oldest undergraduate drama troupe, dating to the late 18th century.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Avatar sequels. James Cameron delays the first of three followup films

Director James Cameron said Wednesday that writing three Avatar sequels is such a complex job he will delay the first film by a year, so it will now be released in late 2017.

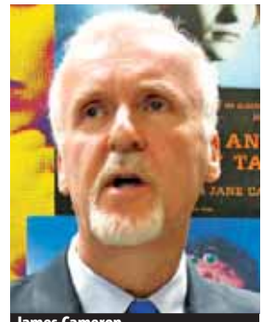
Cameron plans to film all of the highly anticipated sequels at one time and then release the three films over consecutive years.

The first had been due in late 2016, but he said the writing process proved to be "very involved" and that the initial target date was probably too ambitious.

"There's a layer of complexity in getting the story to work as a saga across three films that you don't get when you're making a standalone film," he said in Wellington, New Zealand, where he was helping promote the local film industry with other directors, including Peter Jackson.

Cameron said the goal is to have the three scripts completed this month. He's leading the writing team.

"We're writing three simultaneously. And we've done that so that everything tracks throughout the three films. We're not just going to do one and then make up another one and another one after that," he said. "And parallel with that, we're doing all the design. So we've designed all the creatures and the environments."



James Cameron
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Cameron said it's important that each film links forward to the next one in a satisfying way, but also comes to a resolution so that the audience isn't left hanging.

Released in 2009, Avatar is the highest-grossing film in history, with a box-office take of nearly $2.8 billion. It was named best drama at the Golden Globes and won Academy Awards for cinematography, visual effects and art direction.

Cameron shot the original movie in New Zealand and is planning to shoot the sequels there.

The films will be made by Lightstorm Entertainment and Twentieth Century Fox.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The original Avatar set a box-office record in 2009.

Nicole Kidman plays Millicent in the new movie Paddington. CONTRIBUTED

Kidman is relishing her rare comedic role

Paddington. Leather-clad, stiletto-wearing femme fatale character was written with the Aussie star in mind, director admits

Nicole Kidman knows most people don't consider her a comedic actress.

In her 31-year career, her roles have ranged from the morose to the deliciously sadistic. There are a few comedies, but she doesn't get many offers for that type of work.

She has won an Oscar and worked with Stanley Kubrick, Jane Campion, and Lars Von Trier. So how did she end up in a modest role as a delightfully villainous taxidermist in the children's film Paddington, with a relatively unknown director at the helm?

The answer is simple: She was asked.

"The desire to run the gamut and be diverse is something you're taught at drama school," said Kidman. "We're trained in Shakespeare and then we're trained in Noel Coward and we're trained in mime classes. But a lot of times you're not given the opportunity to explore the things you've cultivated."

For director Paul King, it was a no-brainer. But it wasn't Kidman's 1996 romantic fantasy romp Practical Magic that he was thinking of. He'd seen Gus Van Sant's To Die For and knew Kidman had to be his Millicent. In the film, Millicent is a leather-clad, stiletto-wearing femme fatale who will stop at nothing to stuff the iconic talking bear from Darkest Peru and put him in a museum.

"He wrote it for me. I'm not sure if that's a flattering thing or not," Kidman laughed.

King, who had mostly worked in British television, knew it was a long shot.

"You should never write for an actor because they'll just say no. But I did have her in mind," he said.

The hard part was convincing everyone to actually put the script in front of Kidman. As King describes it, it was a process of being politely insistent. Despite all the warnings that Kidman was "never" going to say yes, as soon as she heard the name Paddington, she jumped. Kidman had grown up reading Michael Bond's books in Australia and it just struck a nerve.

Ultimately, she was the easiest person to cast. She signed on in just 12 hours.

"You don't often see the silly side of Nicole and she's such a funny, easygoing person," said King, who really put the actress to the test. On Day 1, she was hanging upside down on wires and it got more challenging from there.

"I hope it gets a good response. It's smart," said Kidman of the movie, excitedly talking about how the physical comedy of the CG bear makes her two young daughters "squeal with laughter."

The past year was not exactly stellar for Kidman, with middling releases like the thriller Before I Go To Sleep and the historical drama The Railway Man, and the mysterious non-release of Grace of Monaco in the United States.

"It's sad," said Kidman of the Grace Kelly drama. "I put so much work into it. I would have loved for it to have been embraced."

But Kidman insists that she's "not the actor who makes strategic choices. If you look at my career, it's pretty random."

She is taking the reins where she can. She and Reese Witherspoon optioned the rights to the book Big Little Lies, which is in development as a limited series. She's also starring in and producing the adaptation of the quirky novel The Family Fang.

"My life is a roller coaster. My career is a roller coaster. Some people get smooth sailing. I never get that," she said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fallon bit a hit

During a recent appearance on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, Kidman charmingly revealed that the host had missed an opportunity to date her years ago. The YouTube video has more than 19 million views. Kidman insists the bit was "so not planned."

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Ratings: *Certified Fresh:* *Fresh:* *Rotten:* *Audience response:* *Audience anticipation for the film:* +

Comedy

Paddington

Director. Paul King

Stars. Nicole Kidman, Hugh Bonneville

From the beloved novels by Michael Bond and producer David Heyman (Harry Potter), Paddington tells the story of the comic misadventures of a young Peruvian bear (voiced by Firth) who travels to the city in search of a home. Finding himself lost and alone, he begins to realize that city life is not all he had imagined — until he meets the kindly Brown family.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 96% **Audience:** 87%

Comedy

The Wedding Ringer

Director. Jeremy Garelick

Stars. Josh Gad, Kevin Hart

Doug Harris (Josh Gad) is a lovable but socially awkward groom-to-be with a problem: He has no best man. With less than two weeks to go until he marries the girl of his dreams (Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting), Doug is referred to Jimmy Callahan (Kevin Hart), owner and CEO of Best Man, Inc., a company that provides flattering best men for socially challenged guys in need. What ensues is a hilarious wedding charade.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: No reviews yet **Audience:** +93%

Drama

American Sniper

Director. Clint Eastwood

Stars. Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller

From director Clint Eastwood comes American Sniper, starring Bradley Cooper as Chris Kyle, the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history. U.S. Navy SEAL sniper Kyle is sent to Iraq with only one mission: to protect his brothers-in-arms. His pinpoint accuracy saves countless lives on the battlefield. However, his reputation is also growing behind enemy lines, putting a price on his head.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 74% **Audience:** + 99%

Mystery/Drama

Inherent Vice

Director. Paul Thomas Anderson

Stars. Joaquin Phoenix

Inherent Vice is the seventh feature from Paul Thomas Anderson and the first-ever film adaption of a Thomas Pynchon novel. Private eye Doc Sportello's ex-old lady suddenly shows up with a story about her current billionaire boyfriend, and a plot by his wife and her boyfriend to kidnap that billionaire and throw him in a looney bin...well, easy for her to say.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 73% **Audience:** +94%

Action/Adventure

Taken 3

Director. Olivier Megaton

Stars. Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace

Liam Neeson returns as ex-covert operative Bryan Mills, whose reconciliation with his ex-wife is tragically cut short when she is brutally murdered. Consumed with rage, and framed for the crime, he goes on the run to evade the relentless pursuit of the CIA, FBI and the police. For one last time, Mills must use his "particular set of skills," to track down the real killers.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 31% **Audience:** +96%

Drama

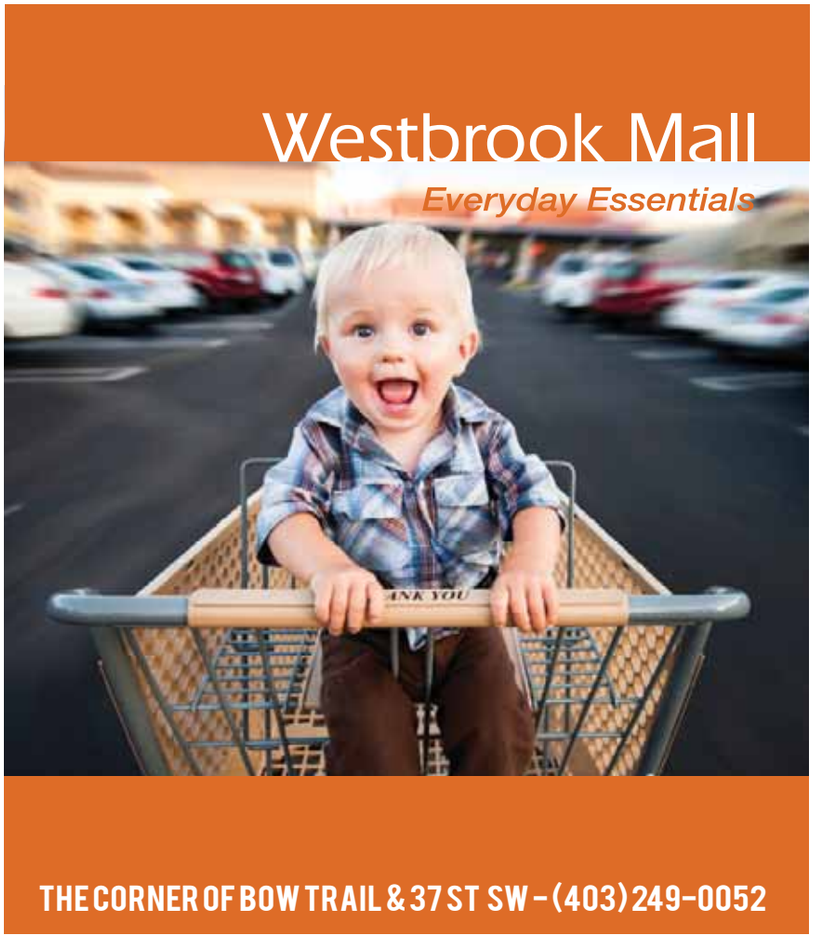
Escobar: Paradise Lost

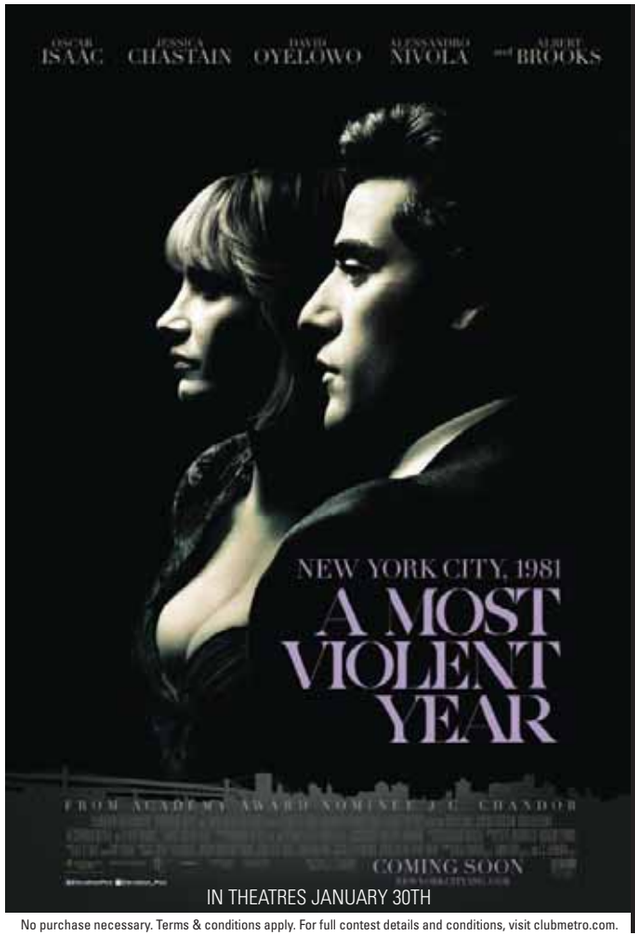
Director. Andrea Di Stefano

Stars. Benicio Del Toro, Josh Hutcherson

For Pablo Escobar (Benicio Del Toro), family is everything. When young surfer Nick (Josh Hutcherson) falls for Escobar's niece, he finds his life on the line when he's pulled into the dangerous world of the family business.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 50% **Audience:** +88%

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Sienna Miller as Taya Kyle in American Sniper. CONTRIBUTED

Miller's career takes a turn for the serious

Movie roles. The U.K. actress used to be best known as tabloid fodder, but now she's landing some heavy-hitting parts

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

When she was younger, Sienna Miller was a paparazzi magnet. Photographers chased the English actress down streets, and the media obsessed over her relationships and dwelled on her beauty, not her acting.

Now, she seems to have taken drastic steps to shed all that. In 2012 she gave birth to her daughter, Marlowe, with her now-fiancé Tom Sturridge, and regularly describes their life as "boring."

But she's also back in high-profile movies, after years in smaller fare. She played Nancy Schultz, wife of Mark Ruffalo's doomed character, in Foxcatcher, and now plays Taya Kyle, wife of late Army sharpshooter Chris Kyle (played by Bradley Cooper) in Clint Eastwood's American Sniper. And there's plenty more where that came from.

In real life, Taya is very animated. She's definitely not just The Wife.

She's a real firecracker. She's definitely not just a military wife. Clint, I think, is so respectful of women and historically has made movies with great roles for women in them. He'd never have let her be one-dimensional. But it's not her story; it's Chris' story. I'd love to do a movie about Taya. She deserves it. You try to pack a lot into these small, infrequent moments that served the story. I do think her sense of humour, her feistiness shines through.

Taya was very involved with the making of this film and has done press. Was she there as you were filming?

She wasn't on set at all; she'd talk through all the takes. I say this because I love her. She's such an oracle for everyone leading up to it, then was happy to just let us make the film. On Foxcatcher, Nancy Schultz was on-set. That was intimidating, because you feel very self-conscious having the person you're playing watching what you're doing.

How lightly do you tread when talking to someone who suffered this kind of tragedy?

You want to explore every aspect of their relationship while trying to be sensitive of the fact that they're still mourning. With Nancy, it happened a long time ago. She's sort of made peace with it, as awful as it was. Taya is still raw. The man who shot Chris is going on trial in February. She's been in this relentless cycle that's punishing and unforgiving.

New opportunities

- "I made a pact after I had a baby that I wanted to work with the best people. I don't care about the size of the roles; I just want to be in great films, just to learn from these people. Ten weeks after I gave birth to my daughter I was sent Foxcatcher. And once that happened, it opened up opportunities with other filmmakers, because they would tell other directors what I was like to work with. It was quite a good strategy, actually."

Thor whips into shape to play a cyber hacker

Blackhat. Avengers star Chris Hemsworth had to slim down and improve his computer skills for his role in cyber-security thriller

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

When you hire the guy who plays Thor in The Avengers to be the lead hacker in your cyber-security drama, you accept that he's going to be one of those rare hackers in really, really good shape.

But Michael Mann wanted it to at least be plausible that Chris Hemsworth's superhuman physique could belong to an expert coder.

So we meet Hathaway — Hemsworth's character in Blackhat — behind bars, doing time for computer crimes, and a lot of push-ups.

"Once I'm done with Thor, I get rid of that bulk and size because that just sort of screams that character," Hemsworth explains. "Me and Michael talked about the time he'd spent in prison. You go in one person and come out another and, through those experiences he was going to physically be able to handle himself."

Being able to pull that off meant more than the usual post-Thor slim-down.

"I wanted to do more with my training than just running on the treadmill and trying to get rid of the weight," he says. "I've boxed a lot in the past and done a lot of Muay Thai."

Of course, hitting the gym wasn't the only training Hemsworth had to undergo. He also had to pass muster behind a keyboard, something that was much more foreign to him.

So time spent with cyber-security experts hired for the film — some of them former black hat hackers (the 'dark side' hackers) — proved invaluable.

"I was pretty limited in my digital, cyber involvement. It fascinated me," he says. "It became evident pretty quick that the majority of us knew nothing compared to what these guys knew.

"I remember asking one of the guys, 'Knowing what you know, do you look at the world differently? Do you feel you have an upper hand?'

"He just started laughing. He said, 'Man, people have no idea how exposed they are and vulnerable and what's possible.'

"And that's it, that's the power now: the brains. Not just in the criminal world but anywhere, they're the guys that are the superheroes, you know? That sort of highly intelligent, alien-type advancement that these guys seem to have within themselves was something that, every day, impressed me."

Also impressive was Mann's insistence on shooting on location, in places as authentic to the story as possible — which took them to Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Hong Kong.

"You could shoot on the backlot in L.A. somewhere, in some parking lot and mock it up on a green screen, which I've had plenty of over the years. But you have a visceral, physical response to being in those places," he explains.

"The sights and sounds and smells just bring something out of you, and you're not having to fake or imagine that it's there. It becomes as much of an actor — something you bounce off — as the other people you're working with.

"That was such a treat, to work in those places, which are loud and noisy. A lot of the time, I remember the sound guy was worried about it, 'We can't shoot this, it's too much noise.' And Michael was just, 'No, no, keep going, this is great.'"

Chris Hemsworth plays a computer hacker in Blackhat. CONTRIBUTED

Remake

Affleck and Fincher to remake classic

Ben Affleck and David Fincher are reteaming for a remake of Alfred Hitchcock's Strangers on a Train.

On the heels of their hit Gone Girl, the star and director will reunite for a film based on the 1951 classic in which two strangers meet on a train and conspire to carry out murders for one another.

Gone Girl scribe Gillian Flynn is expected to write the screenplay, based on a Patricia Highsmith novel.

Fincher's thriller is to move the initial meeting to a plane. Affleck will play the Farley Granger tennis star of the original, only he'll now be a Hollywood star in the midst of an Oscar campaign.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ben Affleck

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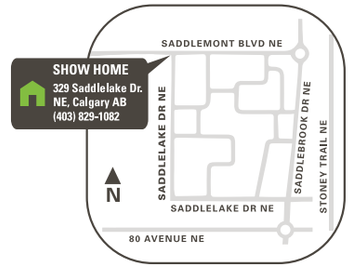

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Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (G) Fri-Thu 1:25-4:15-7:20
The Book of Life (G) Fri-Thu 1:20-6:45
The Boxtrolls (PG) Fri-Thu 1:30-3:50
Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri-Thu 4:05-10:05
Fury (14A) Fri-Thu 1-3:55-6:55-9:40
Gone Girl (18A) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:45-8
Guardians of the Galaxy (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-9:50
The Homesman (STC) Fri-Thu 1:10-7-9:30
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) Fri-Thu 12:55-4:10-7:30-10
The Interview (14A) Fri-Thu 1:15-4:20-7:30-10
John Wick (14A) Fri-Thu 4-9:35
The Judge (14A) Fri-Thu 3:45-6:50
St. Vincent (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-4:20-7:25-9:50
Whiplash (14A) Fri-Thu 7:10-9:45

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American Sniper (14A) Fri-Sun 12:55-4:10-7:20-10:25 Mon-Tue 1:25-4:25-7:25-10:25 Wed 4:25-7:25-10:25 Thu 1:25-4:25-7:25-10:25 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1:30
Annie (G) Fri-Sun 1 Mon-Thu 1:35
Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Sun 1:15 Mon-Thu 1:30
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Sun 4-6:50 Mon 4:10 Tue-Wed 4:10-6:50 Thu 4:10
Blackhat (14A) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:35-3:40-7:10-10:15 No Passes Mon-Thu 3:40-7:10-10:15
City Lights (STC) Mon 7
Exhibition OnScreen: Girl With a Pearl Earring (STC) Sun 12:55
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG) Fri-Thu 3:15
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 12:05-6:30-9:45 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:45
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri-Sun 3:50-6:45-9:40 Mon-Thu 4:20-7:15-10:10
The Imitation Game (PG) Fri-Sun 1:20-4:25-7:15-10:10 Mon-Thu 1:55-4:35-7:20-10
Interstellar (PG) Fri-Wed 9:30
Into the Woods (STC) Fri-Sun 1:10-4:05-7:10 Mon-Thu 1:45-4:40-7:40-10:30
The Metropolitan Opera: The Merry Widow (STC) Sat 10:55
National Theatre Live: Treasure Island (STC) Thu 7
Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb (PG) Fri 2-4:30-7:05-9:35 Sat 11:30-2-4:30-7:05-9:35 Sun-Wed 2-4:30-7:05-9:35 Thu 2-4:30
Paddington (G) Fri-Sun 12:20-2:45-5:10-7:35-9:55 Mon-Tue 1:50-4:15-6:55-9:20 Wed 4:15-6:55-9:20 Thu 1:50-4:15-6:55-9:20 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1:30
Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Sat 11
Taken 3 (14A) Fri-Thu 2:20-5:05-7:45-10:30
Unbroken (PG) Fri 12:30-3:45-6:55-10:05 Sat-Sun 3:45-6:55-10:05 Mon-Thu 3:35-6:45-10:05
The Wedding Ringer (14A) Fri-Sun 12-2:25-4:55-7:25-10:20 Mon-Thu 2:25-4:55-7:30-10:20

Selma. ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA/PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Eau Claire Market, 200 Barlay Parade

American Sniper (14A) Fri 7:20-10:20 Sat-Sun 1:10-4:10-7:20-10:20 Mon-Thu 6:10-9:10
Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) (14A) Fri 7-10:10 Sat-Sun 12:50-3:50-7-10:10 Mon-Thu 5:50-8:50
The Imitation Game (PG) Fri 7:10-10 Sat-Sun 1-4-7:10-10 Mon-Thu 6-9
Inherent Vice (18A) Fri 6:40-9:50 Sat-Sun 12:20-3:30-6:40-9:50 Mon-Thu 5:20-8:30
The Theory of Everything (G) Fri 6:50-9:40 Sat-Sun 12:40-3:40-6:50-9:40 Mon-Tue 5:40-8:40 Wed 9:30 Thu 5:40-8:40
Wild (14A) Fri 6:30-9:30 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:20-6:30-9:30 Mon-Thu 5:30-8:20

Landmark Cinemas 16 Country Hills, 388 Country Hills Blvd

American Sniper (14A) Fri 12:40-3:50-7-10:10 Sat 10:40-12:40-3:50-7-10:10 Sun 10:40 Mon 3:50 Tue-Thu 3:50-7-10:10 Sun 12:40-3:50-7-10:10 Mon 7-10:10
American Sniper: The IMAX Experience (14A) Fri-Sun 12-3-6:15-9:20 Mon-Thu 3-6:15-9:20
Annie (G) Fri 12:15 Sat 6 Sun 12:15-3:10-6 Mon-Thu 3:10-6 Fri 3:10-6 Sat 12:15-3:10
Blackhat (14A) Fri-Sat 12:20-3:30-6:45-9:50 Sun 12:30-3:30-6:45-9:50 Mon-Thu 3:30-6:45-9:50
The Boy Next Door (14A) Thu 9:15
Exhibition: Manet -- Portraying Life (G) Sat 11
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG) Fri-Thu 3:45
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 12:30-7:10-10:15 Mon-Thu 7:10-10:15
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri 9:10 Sat-Sun 10:50-9:10 Mon-Wed 9:10
I (14A) Fri-Sun 1-5-9 Mon-Thu 5-9
The Imitation Game (PG) Fri 1:10-4:20-7:30-10:10 Sat-Sun 10:45-1:10-4:20-7:30-10:10 Mon-Thu 4:20-7:30-10:10
In Search of Beethoven (STC) Sun 11
Inherent Vice (18A) Fri-Sun 12-3:15-6:20-9:40 Mon-Thu 3:15-6:20-9:40
Into the Woods (STC) Fri 12:50-3:55-6:50-9:45 Sat-Sun 11-12:50-3:55-6:50-9:45 Mon-Thu 3:55-6:50-9:45
Mortdecai (STC) Thu 7:15-10
Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb (PG) Fri-Sun 1:40-4:40-7:10 Mon-Wed 4:40-7:10 Thu 4
Paddington (G) Fri-Sat 1:15-4-6:30-9:15 Sun 10:35-1:15-4-6:30-9:15 Mon-Thu 4-6:30-9:15 Sat 10:35
Selma (PG) Fri 12:45-3:40-6:45 Sat-Sun 12:45-3:40-6:45-9:40 Mon-Thu 3:40-6:45-9:40 Fri 9:40
Strange Magic (STC) Thu 7-9:45
Taken 3 (14A) Fri 1:50-4:30-7:20-10 Sat 10:30-1:50-4:30-7:20-10 Sun 10:30-2-4:30-7:20-10 Mon-Thu 4:30-7:20-10
Tevar (14A) Fri-Wed 9:40
Unbroken (PG) Fri-Sun 12:10-3:20-6:40-9:50 Mon-Wed 3:20-6:40-9:50 Thu 3:20
The Wedding Ringer (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:50-7:50-10:15 Mon-Thu 4:50-7:50-10:15
Wild (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:10-7:40-10:15 Mon-Thu 4:10-7:40-10:15

Landmark Cinemas 10 Shawnessy & EXTRA Calgarytudio, 100-16061 MacLeod Trail

American Sniper (14A) Fri-Thu 12:30-3:45-7-10:15
Annie (G) Fri 12:45-3:45 Sat-Sun 10:30-12:45-3:45 Mon-Thu 12:45-3:45
Blackhat (14A) Fri-Thu 12-3:10-6:30-9:40
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG) Fri-Thu 4
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies 3D (PG) Fri-Thu 12:10-8
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri-Tue 6:50-9:45 Wed 9:45 Thu 6:50-9:45
The Imitation Game (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4:10-7:10-10:10
In Search of Beethoven (STC) Sun 11
Into the Woods (STC) Fri-Sat 12:20-3:20-6:40-10 Sun 3:20-6:40-10 Mon-Thu 12:20-3:20-6:40-10
Paddington (G) Fri 1:15-4:15-7:20-9:50 Sat-Sun 10:45-1:15-4:15-7:20-9:50 Mon-Thu 1:15-4:15-7:20-9:50
Selma (PG) Fri-Thu 12-3:15-6:20-9:30
Taken 3 (14A) Fri-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:30-10:20
The Wedding Ringer (14A) Fri-Thu 1:45-4:30-7:45-10:30

Globe Cinema, 617-8 Avenue

The Babadook (14A) Sat 7
Escobar: Paradise Lost (PG) Fri 7-9:20 Sat-Sun 1-3:20-7-9:20 Mon-Thu 7-9:20
Gangs of Wasseypur: Part 1 (STC) Fri 9 Sun 9 Tue 9 Thu 9
Gangs of Wasseypur: Part 2 (STC) Sat 9 Mon 9 Wed 9
Gopala Gopala (PG) Sun 3
Zero Motivation (14A) Fri 6:50 Sun-Thu 6:50

Scotiabank Chinook 6455 MacLeod Trail

American Sniper (14A) Fri-Sun 1:10-4:20-7:40-10:45 Mon-Thu 1-4:10-7:30-10:35
Annie (G) Fri-Sun 1:05-4:05-7:10-10:05 Mon-Wed 1:10-4:05-7:10-10:05 Thu 1:10-4:05-10:05
Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Thu 1:30
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Sun 4:30-7:15 Mon-Wed 4:30-7:25 Thu 4:30
Blackhat (14A) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:50-4:05-7:30-10:40 No Passes Mon-Thu 12:40-3:50-7:20-10:30
The Boy Next Door (14A) No Passes Thu 10:15
City Lights (STC) Mon 7
Exhibition OnScreen: Girl With a Pearl Earring (STC) Sun 12:55
Exodus: Gods and Kings 3D (PG) Fri-Thu 10:10

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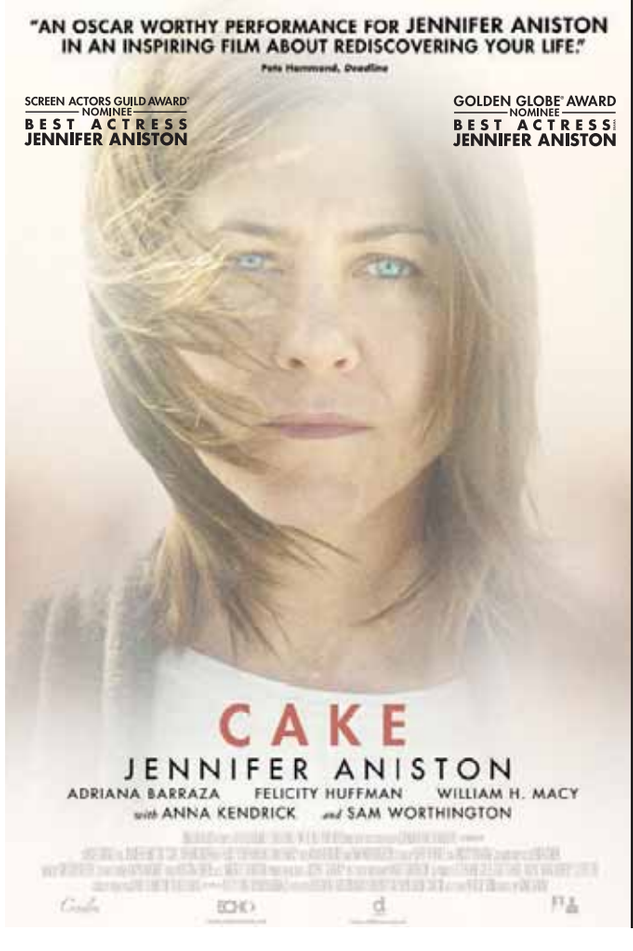
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The Gambler (14A) Fri 1:40-4:25-7:45-10:35 Sat-Sun 4:25-7:45-10:35 Mon-Wed 1:40-4:25-7:30-10:30 Thu 1:40-4:25-7:30
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG) Fri-Sun 5:30-9 Mon-Thu 6-9:30
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies -- An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) Fri-Thu 12:30-3:45-7-10:20
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri-Sun 1:05-4:20-7:25-10:25 Mon-Wed 1:15-4:20-7:35-10:35 Thu 1:15-4:20-7:35
The Imitation Game (PG) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:20-7:10-10:15 Mon-Thu 12:50-4-7:10-9:55
Interstellar (PG) Fri-Thu 2-6-9:45
Into the Woods (STC) Fri-Sun 12:55-3:50-7:20-10:20 Mon-Thu 12:55-3:55-7:05-10:05
The Metropolitan Opera: The Merry Widow (STC) Sat 10:55
Mortdecai (STC) Thu 10:35
National Theatre Live: Treasure Island (STC) Thu 7
Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb (PG) Fri-Sun 12:15-3 Mon-Thu 12:35-3:30
Paddington (G) Fri-Sun 12-2:25-4:50-7:20-9:55 Mon-Wed 2-4:35-7:15-9:55 Thu 4:35-7:15-9:55 Star & Strollers Screening Thu 1
Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Sat 11
Penguins of Madagascar (G) Fri 12:25 Sat 2:50 Sun 12:25 Mon-Thu 12:45
Selma (PG) Fri-Sun 1:05-4:30-7:30-10:25 Mon-Thu 1:05-4:15-7:25-10:25
Taken 3 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:40-4:45-7:35-10:30 Mon-Thu 1:40-4:45-7:40-10:25
Unbroken (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20-3:30-7-10:15 Mon-Thu 12:30-3:55-7:05-10:15
The Wedding Ringer (14A) Fri 12:10-2:40-5:10-7:50-10:35 Sat 12:10-2:50-5:20-7:50-10:35 Sun 12:10-2:40-5:10-7:50-10:35 Mon-Wed 2:15-5:10-7:40-10:15 Thu 5:10-7:40-10:15 Star & Strollers Screening Thu 1
The Woman in Black 2: Angel of Death (14A) Fri 4-7:05-10:30 Sat 5:10-7:45-10:30 Sun 4-7:05-10:30 Mon 4:15-10 Tue 4:15-7:20-10 Wed 4:15-10 Thu 4:15-10:35

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Big Eyes (PG) Fri-Sat 7 Mon-Thu 7
Foxcatcher (PG) Sat 3:30-9:30 Sun 9 Mon-Tue 9:15 Thu 9:15

Sunridge Spectrum
2555 32nd Street

American Sniper (14A) Fri-Sat 1-4:10-7:30-10:35 Sun-Tue 1-4-7-10:10 Wed 4-7-10:10 Thu 1-4-7-10:10 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Annie (G) Fri-Sat 12:35 Sun-Thu 1:20
Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Thu 12:55
Blackhat (14A) No Passes Fri-Sat 12:40-3:55-7:20-10:30 No Passes Sun 12:40-3:50-7:10-10:15 No Passes Mon-Thu 2:10-7:10-10:15
The Boy Next Door (14A) No Passes Thu 9:15
Feng Shui 2 (14A) Fri-Sat 12:20-3:20-7:10-10:10 Sun 12:30-3:20-7:20-10:10 Mon-Thu 2-4:55-8:20
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG) Fri-Sat 3:15 Sun-Thu 4:50
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies 3D (PG) Fri-Sat 12-6:30-9:50 Sun-Thu 1:35-8:10
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri-Sat 12:15-3:10-6:10 Sun-Thu 2:20-6:10
I (14A) Fri-Sat 12:25 Sun-Thu 12:55 Fri-Sat 4:30-9 Sun-Thu 4:45-9
Into the Woods (STC) Fri-Sat 12:05-3-6:35-9:35 Sun 12:15-3:25-6:40-9:40 Mon-Thu 1:40-4:40-7:40
Mortdecai (STC) Thu 9:10
Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb (PG) Fri-Sat 1:25-4:05-6:50-9:25 Sun 12:35-3:15-6:30-9:15 Mon-Wed 1:05-3:35-6:30-9:15 Thu 1:05-3:35-6:30
Paddington (G) Fri-Sat 12-2:25-4:50-7:15-9:40 Sun-Thu 1:50-4:25-6:55-9:20
Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Sat 11
PK (PG) Fri-Sat 3:45-7:50 Sun-Thu 4:20-7:50
Taken 3 (14A) Fri-Sat 1:10-4:15-7-10 Sun 1:10-3:50-6:50-9:50 Mon-Thu 1:10-3:50-6:50-9:40
Tevar (14A) Fri-Sat 4-8 Sun-Thu 4:10-8
Unbroken (PG) Fri-Sun 12:10-3:20-6:40-9:55 Mon-Thu 2:30-6:20-9:35
The Wedding Ringer (14A) Fri-Sat 12:10-2:40-5:10-7:45-10:20 Sun-Tue 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:05 Wed 4:30-7:30-10:05 Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:05 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1:30
The Woman in Black 2: Angel of Death (14A) Fri-Wed 9:10

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American Sniper (14A) Fri-Sun 12:40-3:50-7:20-10:25 Mon-Thu 6-9:15
Blackhat (14A) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:50-4:10-7:30-10:30 No Passes Mon-Thu 5:45-9
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG) Fri-Sun 3:40 Mon-Thu 4:25
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20-7-10:15 Mon-Thu 8
The Imitation Game (PG) Fri-Sun 12:45-3:45-6:55-9:45 Mon-Thu 4-6:40-9:20
Inherent Vice (18A) Fri-Sun 1-4:30-8 Mon-Thu 5:20-8:45
Into the Woods (STC) Fri 1-4:05-7:05-10:05 Sat 4:05-7:05-10:05 Sun 1-4:05-7:05-10:05 Mon-Thu 5-8:10
The Metropolitan Opera: The Merry Widow (STC) Sat 10:55
Paddington (G) Fri-Sun 12:30-3-6:30-9:15 Mon-Thu 4:05-6:30-8:55
Selma (PG) Fri-Sun 12:25-3:30-6:45-9:50 Mon-Thu 4:40-8:20
Taken 3 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:10-4-7:25-10:10 Mon-Thu 4:10-6:45-9:25
Unbroken (PG) Fri-Sun 12:40-3:55-7:10-10:20 Mon-Thu 5:05-8:30

Fox has reached a rights deal to remake the 1981 cult hit Escape From New York. CONTRIBUTED

Escape From New York getting a reboot from Fox

Pending film. No script or cast yet for Kurt Russell classic's modern makeover

Fox has secured the rights to remake Escape From New York, John Carpenter's 1981 cult action movie, Deadline reveals.

In September, a wave of rumours suggested that a reboot of Escape from New York was in the works. Some sources even went as far as to speculate (prematurely) on who might follow in Kurt Russell's footsteps in the role of Snake Plissken. Charlie Hunnam, Dan Stevens, Jon Bernthal and Chris Hemsworth were among the names said to be on the shortlist.

Deadline has learned that the remake is indeed underway and that a rights deal has just been reached with Fox.

However, the website specifies that the project does not yet have a script, so the producers have yet to consider any casting choices.

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Gossip

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METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Julianne Moore ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Which Oscar nominee runs the risk of a Norbit?

Hooray, the Oscar nominations are a thing and we can move on with Awards Season! But don't forget, we're also in the glut of winter releases, when studios notoriously dump their shaggiest of dogs, and sometimes that can lead to some awkward cross-promotions for nominated actors.

The most famous case, the horribly received Norbit, came out in early February and is believed to have cost Eddie Murphy an Oscar for Dreamgirls in 2007. So who's running that risk this year? Why, only the odds-on-favourites in the two biggest races. First up, Julianne Moore pretty much has the race tied up for her stellar work in Still Alice, but ads have already started hitting TV for Seventh Son, the not-great-looking fantasy action film featuring Moore as some sort evil witch. Or at least inspiration for future drag queens. It also co-stars previous Oscar winner Jeff Bridges, who just looks embarrassed to be there. And then there's Best Actor nominee Eddie Redmayne, who also plays a campy villain in an early February release, this time in the Wachowskis' Jupiter Ascending. The jury is still out on the sci-fi epic, which will likely either be spectacular or a mess. But Redmayne should come out pretty unscathed, since most of the Jupiter attention seems to be going to Channing Tatum — the only main Foxcatcher actor to not get nominated.

One thing is for sure. Reps for Whiplash star (and Best Supporting Actor favourite) J.K. Simmons are likely doing everything they can to get his goofy Farmers Insurance ads off TV screens before Oscar voting gets too ramped up.

Gwynnie's got more breakup stories for you

Gwyneth Paltrow's making quite a name for herself as an over-sharer. Or maybe all her Goop posting about uncoupling from Chris Martin gave a taste for divulging that she found she liked.

The View from the Top star decided to continue her campaign of candour during a visit to Howard Stern's satellite radio show. For instance, care to learn more about the demise of her engagement to Brad Pitt? "I was such a kid. I was 22 when we met. It's taken me until 40 to get my head out of my ass," she says. "You can't make that decision (to get married) when you're 22 years old ... I wasn't ready, and he was too good for me ... I didn't know what I was doing."

But totally not too good for her? Ex-boyfriend Ben Affleck. "He was not in a good place in his life to have a girlfriend," Paltrow says of their relationship, though she does at least deign to approve of Affleck's eventual choice of a wife, Jennifer Garner. "Not only is she beautiful, (but) she is so warm and she cooks and is so into her kids. And she's hilarious," she says. "I had a girls' dinner before the summer and she came over. She's my neighbour. I really like her a lot." So now you know.

Gwyneth Paltrow

Naya's been showered with criticism since TV remark

Naya Rivera

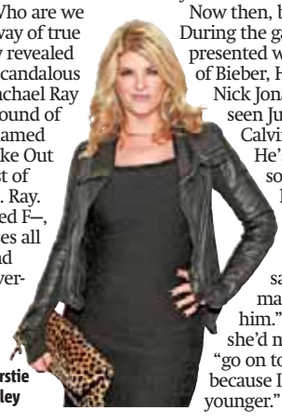
Glee star Naya Rivera is sorry. She's very, very sorry. During a stop at The View earlier this week, Rivera tossed off a few jokes about showering — namely that, "White people shower a lot more than ethnics. I feel like showering more than once a day or every day is such a white people thing." Apparently that didn't go over too well, as Rivera returned to the show to beg forgiveness. "It was supposed to be a joke. I apologize if anyone was offended," she said, directly addressing the viewers at home. "We were talking about a study that says we are supposed to shower, I guess, once or twice every three days, which I had an opinion on — which was supposed to be a joke, but apparently didn't go over so well."

A still from The LEGO Movie

Fans cry foul over Oscar's LEGO Movie snub

Speaking of the Academy Award nominations, many have pointed out the glaring oversight that is The LEGO Movie being left out of the best animated film category. Clearly the Academy was aware of it, since its hit earworm Everything is Awesome is up for Best Song, so what gives? While fans and critics were busy crying foul, though, the film's co-director, Phil Lord, was taking the high road — and keeping busy with the famous building toys.

Kirstie's all ready for a Bieber booty call


Kirstie Alley

So, Kirstie Alley wants to make out with Justin Bieber. And I say we let her. Who are we to stand in the way of true happiness? Alley revealed her potentially scandalous desire on The Rachael Ray Show during a round of the clumsily renamed game Marry, Make Out or Move On. First of all, come on, Ms. Ray. The game is called F—, Marry, Kill. It loses all of its potency and fun when you oversanitize it like that. Even the cleaner version the kids on YouTube play would be acceptable: Kiss, Marry, Kill. But yours? No.

Now then, back to Alley. During the game, she's presented with the choice of Bieber, Harry Styles or Nick Jonas. "We've all seen Justin Bieber's Calvin Klein (ads). He's so handsome. What a handsome man. I'm just all over Justin Bieber," Alley says. "I want to make out with him." She then says she'd marry Styles to "go on tour with him because I want to seem younger."

Rape case

Roman Polanski

Polanski victim says she's forgiven him

Samantha Geimer, the woman Roman Polanski drugged and raped in 1977 when she was 13 years old, says she and the infamous director are totally cool now and all is forgiven. I'm guessing law enforcement officials won't be so nice, though. "I have absolutely forgiven (Polanski). I feel like he owned up to what he did," Geimer tells the National Enquirer after Polanski's request for a new hearing was denied.

"He pleaded guilty and served his sentence and, although he fled, he was fleeing a corrupt and unethical judge." She also reveals that she's in regular email contact with the exiled filmmaker. Those have got to be some interesting messages. **METRO**

Gitch glitch

Justin Bieber

Last time with the Bieber underwear debate — we swear

Since the controversy over how much Justin Bieber's Calvin Klein photos were Photoshopped is still raging, here's one last piece of evidence for you to pore over: A behind-the-scenes Associated Press video from Bieber's shoot has plenty of footage of him in action so you can pause it and compare and contrast with the finished ads. Plus, model Lara Stone shows off some really amazing acting chops in discussing what it was like to work with the Biebs. **METRO**

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SELLING PRICE: $9,364 DELIVERY & DESTINATION: $1,595
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WOOD AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

Ricardo is a Canadian chef, television host and author on a mission: To unite people through the pleasure of food. Discover his delicious and simple recipes every Friday — just in time for the weekend

Wine gives beef tender loving touch

This recipe serves six. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Dinner. Red Wine Braised Beef is a great meal when you have a bit more time to spare

RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

When your cheeks are rosy from a day of being outside, nothing hits the spot like a comfort food classic. Plan ahead and let a blade roast slow-cook while you warm up in front of the fireplace.

1. With the rack in the middle position, preheat the oven to 350 F (180 C).

2. In a large ovenproof skillet, brown the meat in half the oil. Season with salt and pepper on both sides. Set the meat on a plate. In the same skillet, soften the shallots with the spices in the remaining oil (2 tbsp/ 30 ml). Sprinkle with the flour and mix well. Deglaze with the wine. Bring to a boil, whisking constantly.

3. Return the meat to the skillet. Add half the beef broth and the ketchup. Bring to a boil. Cover and roast in the oven for 3 hours. Turn the meat over three or four times during cooking and baste with the remaining beef broth.

4. Add the carrots and pancetta around the roast. Continue cooking, always covered, for about 1 hour or until the meat is fork tender and the vegetables are cooked.

5. To give a nice crust to braised meat, move the rack to the highest position of the oven. Set the oven to broil. Drain the meat and place on a baking sheet. Keep the sauce and toppings warm. Brush top of the roast with honey. Broil for about 3 minutes or until the surface starts to brown.

6. Serve meat with toppings and drizzle with sauce. Serve with barley. **FOLLOW RICARDO ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ON RICARDOCUISINE.COM OR SUBSCRIBE TO HIS MAGAZINE'S ENGLISH EDITION, WHICH LAUNCHED IN 2014.**

Ingredients

- 1 boneless beef blade roast, about 3 lb (1.5 kg) and about 3 inches (7.5 cm) thick
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 3 shallots, chopped
- 2 tsp crushed juniper berries
- 1/2 tsp cracked black pepper
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 cups (500 ml) red wine
- 2 cups (500 ml) beef broth, warm
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) ketchup
- 4 large carrots, diced
- 1/4 lb (115 g) pancetta, diced
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) honey

Liquid Assets

Enjoy a glass as you cook

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

I've written it before, and I'll write it again: I'd never cook with a wine I wouldn't drink.

Not that I'd plunk down a week's pay on some vino to simply pour into a pan. Wine is a secondary flavour component in any main course and not the focal point.

As a basic rule you should always pick a wine that matches your budget and key ingredient.

Today's recipe from Chef Ricardo is a great example of how well liquids and solids can work together in a dish. His braised beef is a hearty entrée that deserves a red wine that's in line with the mouth-filling texture of the meat.

Think a red Bordeaux from France, a spicy Australian Shiraz, a peppery Argentinean Malbec or a rich, full-bodied Chilean Cabernet like the 2013 Errazuriz Estate Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon ($12.99 - $14.99.)

One last tip: Never keep a half-drunk bottle of red in your pantry to "cook with." Once it's opened it will only stay consumable for a few days. **PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.**

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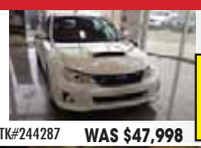
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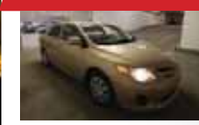
NOW $15,998
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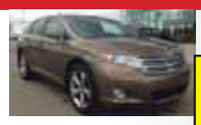
2010 TOYOTA VENZA

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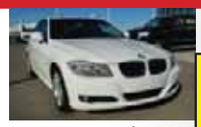
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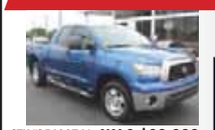
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AFC title game

Colts' Vinatieri on cusp of another kick at glory

Adam Vinatieri savoured all of those New England celebrations.

He made the two big field goals in the "Tuck Rule" playoff game and, of course, the two game-winning Super Bowl kicks.

On Sunday, the long-time Patriots kicker will return to his former home, possibly for the final time.

"It's amazing," the 42-year-old Colts kicker said when asked about his career this week. "I could never have been more lucky. If I wrote it as a book, people would never believe it."

Believe it.

The NFL's oldest player has four Super Bowl rings, is a perfect 6-0 on championship weekend as he makes his seventh appearance Sunday at New England.

A win over the Patriots would send Vinatieri to another Super Bowl and give him a chance to tie Charles Haley for the most individual rings (five).

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Colts kicker Adam Vinatieri converts a field goal against the Broncos on Sunday in Denver.

EZRA SHAW/GETTY IMAGES

Defensive leaders with differing styles

NFC title game.
Seahawks' Wagner, Packers' Matthews go about being effective in their own ways

Seahawks linebacker Bobby Wagner celebrates sacking 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick on Dec. 14 in Seattle.

OTTO GREULE JR/GETTY IMAGES

If it seems as if Clay Matthews is omnipresent off the field, well, yeah. No NFL linebacker has a higher profile than the Green Bay star, thanks to his commercials and his flashy persona.

If you barely know anything about Bobby Wagner, that's understandable, too. He's not into snazzy, leaving that to his Legion of Boom teammates in Seattle.

On Sunday in the NFC championship game, their performances will go a long way toward determining which team goes to the Super Bowl. And while Matthews may add a touch of the ostentatious, Wagner will do things far more quietly, yet just as fiercely.

Indeed, he might be the least-ballyhooed member of this season's All-Pro team.

"With Wags, just killer instinct," fellow All-Pro Earl Thomas said Thursday. "Some guys just have that nasty streak to him, and I want another guy beside me with killer instincts. He has that, Sherm has that, Kam has that, and that fired-up passion is contagious."

Essential, too, for the most feared defence in the league, one that helped the Seahawks win it all last year and has them on the verge of a repeat title — something not accomplished by anyone in a decade.

Quoted

"We're winning games and I'm making plays, so as long as that's happening, we're doing something right."

Packers linebacker Clay Matthews

But, consistent with his nature, Wagner doesn't make a big deal of it all.

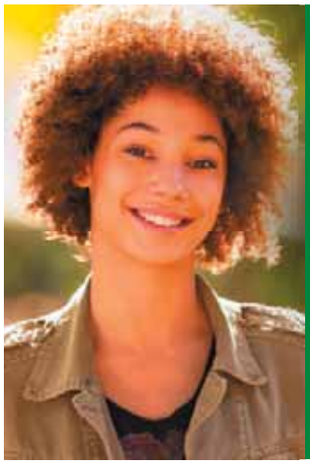
"My job is to be in the middle of everything," said the 2012 second-round draft pick from Utah State. "Also, the signal caller, making sure everybody's in the right spot, making adjustments when I need to, being as vocal as I possibly can on the field."

The Packers will show up at CenturyLink Field with a good but not great defence. Indeed, its only consistent playmaker is Matthews, who made his fifth Pro Bowl in six seasons by being a factor at outside and inside linebacker.

Matthews has displayed throughout his six pro seasons he is much more than a media star capable of ripping on himself in TV ads. He's capable of ripping apart offensive schemes, and his value in Green Bay has been increased with how co-ordinator Dom Capers used him in 2014.

When Capers began moving Matthews around in the Packers' alignments, it caused opponents to guess — something no offence or quarterback is comfortable with. Matthews had 6-1/2 sacks in his final four games and 11 for the season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4 SPORTS



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metro

Jets shoot to win in Big D

NHL. Pavelec just misses shutout as feel-good story in Winnipeg continues against Stars

On Thursday

Jets	Stars
2	1

Ondrej Pavelec made a season-high 45 saves, leading the Winnipeg Jets past the Dallas Stars 2-1 on Thursday night.

Pavelec made 22 of his saves in the second period, preserving what was then a 1-0 lead. Pavelec stopped breakaways by the Stars' Shawn Horcoff and Cody Eakin.

Michael Frolik scored a first-period goal, and Evander Kane added a short-handed clincher at 7:34 of the third during a four-minute Dallas power play.

Trevor Daley scored the Stars' goal at 18:44 of the third period after coach Lindy Ruff had pulled goalie Anders Lindback.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stars forward Erik Cole and Winnipeg Jets defenceman Dustin Byfuglien crowd goalie Ondrej Pavelec during the first period of Thursday night's game in Dallas. RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

Flames kick up ice in the desert

Calgary Flames forward David Jones knocks Arizona Coyote Mikael Boedker into the boards as Johnny Goudreau looks to pick up the puck on Thursday night in Glendale. Go to metronews.ca for results and more coverage of the game. CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Tour of Alberta

Race goes north

The Tour of Alberta's cycling stage race will be limited to the northern half of the province, but includes a mountain stage in 2015.

Grande Prairie will host the first two days of the Sept. 2 to 7 race before it moves through Grand Cache, Jasper, Edson, Spruce Grove and Edmonton, organizers announced Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Pageau helps push Sens past Habs

Jean-Gabriel Pageau's first goal of the season proved to be the game winner Thursday night as the Ottawa Senators defeated the Montreal Canadiens 4-1.

Mika Zibanejad, Erik Karlsson and Erik Condra also scored for the Sens (18-17-8). Craig Anderson stopped 25 shots in his 399th game.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Blue Jays strike arbitration deal with lefty Cecil

The Toronto Blue Jays have avoided arbitration with Brett Cecil, signing the left-handed relief pitcher Thursday to a $2.475-million US, one-year contract.

Cecil was 2-3 last season with five saves and a 2.70 earned-run average in 66 appearances.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Golf

Simpson takes lead in Hawaii

Webb Simpson made his debut with a conventional putter Thursday at the Sony Open.

One year away from the new rule that outlaws anchored strokes, Simpson ditched his belly putter for a regular one for his 2015 debut and notched an 8-under 62 that gave him a share of the lead with Paul Casey. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Brampton's Larin goes No. 1 to Orlando

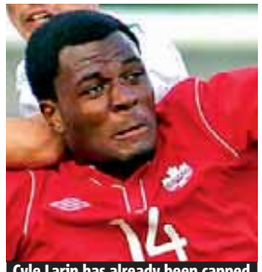
MLS. Toronto suburb continues to churn out top talent as expansion club drafts Canadian

Teenager Cyle Larin made history at the MLS SuperDraft on Thursday when he became the first Canadian to go first overall.

The 19-year-old forward from Brampton was the consensus No. 1 pick, with expansion Orlando City SC resisting all trade offers for the UConn sophomore.

"The reason that goal-scorers go for the most money is because they're the most valuable," said Orlando head coach Adrian Heath, a former Stoke City and Everton star. "If you look at what he's got, we think there's a lot of promise there."

The previous high for a Canadian pick came in 2013, when midfielder Kyle Bekker was taken third overall by Toronto FC.



Cyle Larin has already been capped three times by the Canadian national squad. THE CANADIAN PRESS

With Canadian teams picking third, sixth, ninth, 11th and 13th, there was a definite northern feel to the top end of the draft at the Philadelphia Convention Center.

Toronto FC added to that by using the third of its three first-rounders to take Syracuse's Skylar Thomas, a defender from Pickering.

Surrounded by his Canadian under-20 teammates, Larin watched the draft on a laptop from Jamaica in advance of a game against El Salvador at the CONCACAF U-20 Championship. As soon as the pick was announced, a smiling Larin was swallowed up by a sea of chanting, delirious teammates.

It proved to be a roller-coaster day for Larin as the young Canadians lost 3-2 in stoppage time.

"It was an exciting time when I got drafted No. 1. I was hoping to top it off with a win," he said from Jamaica.

The six-foot-two 190-pound Larin has already been capped three times by the Canadian national squad.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Connecting for Connecticut

Cyle Larin scored 23 goals in 39 career games in his two years at the University of Connecticut. As an underclassman, he signed a Generation Adidas contract which will not count against Orlando's salary cap.

Bucks bruise egos in London

The Milwaukee Bucks mascot consoles former Arsenal and New York Red Bulls star Thierry Henry during Thursday's NBA game at London's O2 Arena. Henry could only watch as O.J. Mayo scored 22 points, Brandon Knight had 20 points and six steals, and the Bucks routed New York 95-79. GLYN KIRK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Speed it up

MLB toys with pitch clock idea

A pitch clock will be used this season during minor league games at Triple-A and Double-A, but it has been ruled out for the major leagues this year.

Baseball commissioner Bud Selig said Thursday the decision to use the pitch clock in the minors followed a successful experiment in the Arizona Fall League.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Houston rockets past Thunder

James Harden scored 15 of his 31 points in the Houston Rockets' big first quarter in a 112-101 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Thursday night.

The Rockets led 40-18 after one and didn't trail again to bounce back after a loss to Orlando on Wednesday night that snapped a four-game winning streak.

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$19,000
AUTOMATIC, 7 PASSENGER

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AUGMENTED REALITY

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metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Good fortune is heading your way. You may find that hard to believe but if you adopt a more positive outlook today and over the weekend it will help you to recognize how lucky you are.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
No matter what sad tales you hear from people today you will be on a high. As far as you are concerned the world is, was and always will be wonderful.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
If you force yourself to be enthusiastic about a task you don't care for today you may be surprised to find that you actually quite enjoy it.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
A few days from now you will look back and wonder why and how you allowed yourself to get so worked up about a relationship matter. Life always moves on and so should you.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
If someone tries to belittle your efforts over the next 24 hours it can only be because they are jealous of your ability to get things done and the way (almost) everyone loves you.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
There is something you have wanted to do for many years but for one reason or another never got around to. Now the universe is making it easy for you to get started on it.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will be less inclined to worry about your cashflow today and that's good. The only danger is you could start spending money like it grows on trees. It doesn't.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Your luck will turn for the better very soon but today you must be cautious, especially when travelling and dealing with people whose motives you know little about.

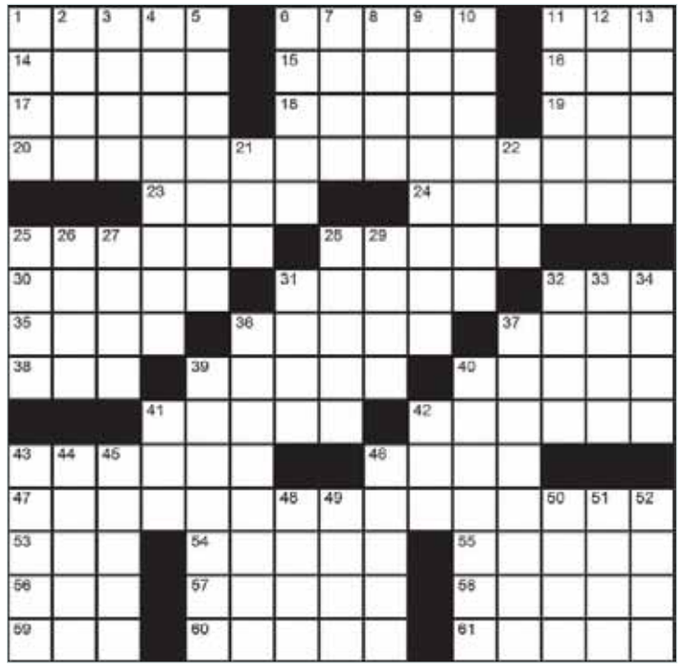
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The next few days will be lucky for you and what you gain you will deserve. Not everyone will agree with it but not everyone is aware how hard you worked to get to your current position.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you gamble on something and win today you would be wise not to go any further. The planets warn that once you are ahead the only way you will stay ahead is by calling it a day.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Don't feel bad about it if you gain from someone else's loss over the next 24 hours. According to the planets it is your turn to get lucky, so take advantage of the situation.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If someone tries to do you a favour don't automatically assume that it's some kind of scam. Genuine people do exist.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Three-player card game
6. Sports buff's interests
11. US lawyers' org.
14. Heat-resistant glassware
15. Java hue
16. "Follow You Down" by __ Blossoms
17. Spew fire
18. Mr. Flynn
19. Contribute
20. Sniffle, achoo... Cold treatment alternatives: 2 wds.
23. Twisted
24. Immediately!
25. Misgivings
28. Blue Rodeo's "__ Hit Me Yet"
30. Loosen
31. Stevie Wonder's "Shoo-__-__-Be-Doo-Da-Day"
32. iPhone download
35. Medical suffix
36. Convict
37. "Ripley's Believe __ Not!": 2 wds.
38. The Anteater's mealtime noise in the B.C. comic strip
39. Songstress Ms. Scott's
40. Rusty hue
41. __ _ letter (Used Canada Post)
42. Family emblems
43. Becky Black and Maya Miller = Vancouver rock duo The __ _-_.
46. Scottish rolls
47. Canadian artist (b.1905 - d.1989) ...his paintings depict the landscapes of Alberta and Saskatchewan: 2 wds.
53. "Don't Bring Me Down" gr.
54. Herman's Hermits singer Peter
55. "__ Was a Lady" (1945)
56. Has the ability
57. The Jackson 5's "__ __ There"
58. Serviceable
59. Middle
60. Guitarist Duane, and surnamesakes
61. Dished, __ out

Down
1. Unlock
2. "__ Breckinridge" (1970)
3. Men's cologne brand
4. CBC's "__ of Doyle"
5. Drastic
6. Extract metal from ore
7. Pressure unit
8. Land unit
9. 4th Prime Minister of Canada, from 1892 to 1894: Sir John __ (b.1845 - d.1894)
10. Hamilton-based cheese company since 1962
11. Anew
12. Posh bathroom feature
13. Hence...: 2 wds.
21. Years: French
22. Actress, __-Marie Jones
25. Test
26. Do __ others...
27. Fighting: 2 wds.
28. No Doubt's "__ Good"
29. Big fusses
31. Fashion accessory
32. Sporty sorts, shortly
33. Harbour site
34. CEO
36. Have a successful day as a prospector during the Klondike: 2 wds.
37. Emulate Kurt Browning: 2 wds.
39. "I Dream of __"
40. The __ (Historic concert hall in Vancouver)
41. Do moguls
42. Meower
43. Portion
44. Relieve
45. Baa Baa! Duplicate, like Dolly
46. Namesakes of Marcia's "Desperate Housewives" role
48. Hilly countryside area
49. Dionne Warwick's "Walk __ __"
50. Modify
51. Annoy
52. Singer/songwriter Lou

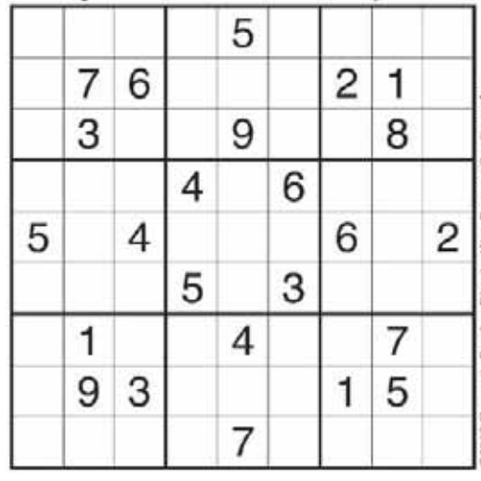
Yesterday's Crossword

Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

7	2	8	3	1	4	6	5	9
6	5	3	7	2	9	8	1	4
1	9	4	6	5	8	2	7	3
2	6	9	4	7	3	1	8	5
8	4	1	5	9	2	3	6	7
3	7	5	1	8	6	4	9	2
9	1	2	8	3	5	7	4	6
4	3	7	9	6	1	5	2	8
5	8	6	2	4	7	9	3	1

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"You can be sure that wherever in the whole world the Message is preached, what she has just done is going to be remembered and admired." - *Matthew 26:13MSG* This was Jesus' response to the critics of the woman with alabaster jar who anointed Him with expensive perfume which is an allusion to the fact that nothing is too precious to give up for God. Make out part of your precious time to serve your Maker who is able to reward those who diligently seek Him.

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